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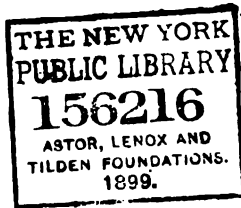


BIOGRAPHY
OF THE SIGNERS TO THE
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

SECOND EDITION,
REVISED, IMPROVED, AND ENLARGED.

VOLUME II.

PHILADELPHIA:
WILLIAM BROWN AND CHARLES PETERS.
1828.



Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

***** BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the 12th day of July, in the
L. S. fifty-third year of the Independence of the United States of
***** America, A. D. 1828, William Brown and Charles Peters, of the
said District, have deposited in this Office the title of a Book, the right
whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

“Biography of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence.
Second Edition, Revised, Improved, and Enlarged. In five
Volumes.”

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled
“An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps,
charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the
times therein mentioned.” And also to the act, entitled “An act, supple-
mentary to an act, entitled ‘An act for the encouragement of learning, by
securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprie-
tors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned,’ and extending the
benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical
and other prints.”

D. CALDWELL,
Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

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ROGER SHERMAN.

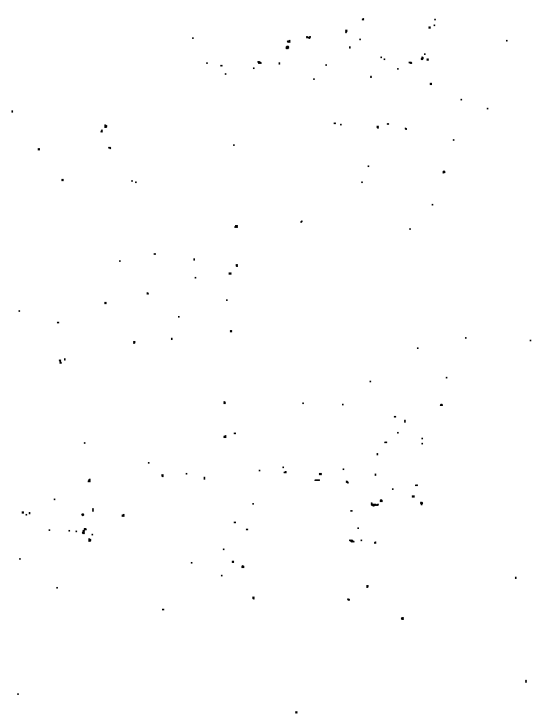
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of fanciful diction, nor the solidity of his feelings less admired,
because they were partially suppressed. He never indulged

VOL. II.—A.



ROGER SHERMAN.

THE Declaration of Independence was signed on behalf of the state of Connecticut by four delegates, ROGER SHERMAN, SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, WILLIAM WILLIAMS, and OLIVER WOLCOTT.

Among the illustrious characters whose names are inscribed upon the brightest record that adorns the annals of our country, few possessed more solid attainments than the first of these, ROGER SHERMAN. In the display of rhetorical embellishment, he had many superiors, but this inequality was amply compensated by the close reasoning and convincing arguments which justified the propriety of his political opinions, and supported those measures which his judgment pointed out as best adapted to promote the welfare of his country. He belonged to that class of statesmen who seek rather to convince the reason, than triumph over the passions, of men. The vigour of his mind appeared more conspicuous in the plain and simple manner in which it was elicited, than if it had been ornamented with all the beauties of elocution. He pursued the thread of his discourse without deviating from the point to which it was directed, or seeking to inveigle the judgments of those whom he was unable to convince. But the energy of his address was not diminished by the absence of fanciful diction, nor the solidity of his feelings less admired, because they were partially suppressed. He never indulged

in those brilliant bursts of oratory, which please and sparkle for a moment, and pass away without leaving a trace of their usefulness behind; his impressive manner displayed feelings more deep and durable, not aroused by momentary excitement, but founded upon calm deliberation, and a clear perception of the justice of his cause. By this uniform and dispassionate course, he attained extensive influence in the councils of his country, and attracted the admiration and esteem of his compatriots. The acuteness of his understanding, and the solidity of his judgment, were powerfully aided by his unremitting application, and intimate knowledge of human nature. Possessed of a strong, discriminating mind, and guided by the most rigid rules of prudence, his stern integrity and general good sense, together with his cautious perseverance, elevated him to a prominent station among the most successful politicians of his time, and gave him a great and merited ascendancy in the several deliberative bodies of which he was a member. It has been said of Roger Sherman that he seldom failed to procure the adoption of any measure which he advocated, and which he considered essential to the public good.

His mind was early impressed with the truth of the christian religion, and, faithful to its precepts, he passed through the turbulent and conflicting scenes of the revolution without a blemish on his character.

Before he had attained the age of twenty-one years, he made a public profession of his religion, and continued more than half a century a zealous defender of its doctrines. Exemplary in his attention to the forms and discipline of the church to which he was attached, he evinced, by his conduct, the importance of the application of the moral doctrines of christianity to the duties of social life.

Captain John Sherman, the great-grandfather of the sub-

ject of the present memoir, emigrated to America about the year 1635, from Dedham, in England, and settled at Watertown, Massachusetts. His grandson, William, the father of Roger Sherman, was a farmer in moderate circumstances, and resided at Newton, Massachusetts, where Roger Sherman was born on the nineteenth day of April, 1721. In 1723, the family removed to Stoughton in the same state.

Roger Sherman may be classed among those extraordinary men, who, surmounting the disadvantages of education, have risen to eminence through the superiority of their genius. He received no other education than the ordinary country schools in Massachusetts at that period afforded. He was neither assisted by a public education, nor private tuition, and the substantial abilities which he evinced during his public life were wholly the offspring of his own exertions. His improvements arose from the superiority of his intellectual powers, his thirst after knowledge, and his indefatigable industry in the pursuit of it. Hence he attained a very considerable share of general science, particularly in logic, geography, mathematics, the general principles of philosophy, history, theology, and especially in law and politics, which were his favourite studies, and in which he particularly excelled. Without those advantages which, in early youth, are so essential in directing and impelling the mind to useful studies, and compelled to assiduous labour for a maintenance, his vigorous mind surmounted all the obstacles which his situation interposed, and, availing himself of every moment of leisure, he acquired, from self instruction, an extensive knowledge and capacity of usefulness, which placed him on a level with his distinguished compatriots, who have received all the advantages of education.

The nature of his early employment more decidedly claims our admiration in relation to his self-advancement in life, and the eagerness which impelled him to prosecute his intellectual

improvements. It is a remarkable fact, that the man who stood among the foremost in the ranks of patriots and legislators, and served his country with distinguished ability in various high and honourable offices during a period of forty years, was apprenticed to a shoemaker, and pursued that occupation for some time after he was twenty-two years of age.

There is a striking analogy between the early lives, and self promotion, of Mr. Sherman and of Dr. Franklin. Surmounting difficulties which, to common minds, would have been insuperable, they gradually ascended from the humble walks of life, to a prominent station amongst men. The vigour of intellect and energetic perseverance which they possessed, could not be stifled by the drudgery of a mechanical employment. It is recorded of Mr. Sherman that he was accustomed to sit at his work with a book before him, devoting to study every moment that his eyes could be spared from the occupation in which he was engaged. The same thirst for knowledge was evinced by Dr. Franklin whilst he laboured as a tallow-chandler in the shop of his father, and during his apprenticeship, as a printer, to his brother. Upon the removal of the family, in 1723, Mr. Sherman travelled, with his tools, on foot, to New Milford, where he continued to work at his trade for some time. Dr. Franklin, at the age of seventeen, performed his pedestrian journey to Philadelphia in search of employment, the circumstances of which are so admirably depicted in the simple and engaging narrative of his life. Such were the early prospects, and contracted opportunities of men, who afterwards flourished in an exalted sphere, and contributed, in an eminent degree, by their wisdom and virtues, to maintain the rights and liberties of their country.

Although there are many who have emerged from obscurity, who never, without reluctance, recur to the humble circum-

stances of early life, they are seldom of that class who have risen to eminence by the superiority of their intellectual endowments. This probably arises from the willing homage paid to learning and genius,—to the favoured few who are endowed by nature with capacities to enlighten and amuse. To the merely rich, this homage is never spontaneously given, although interest may sometimes elicit its semblance. The sudden acquisition of wealth always excites jealousy, and the unsuccessful competitor indulges his envy by frequent recurrence to the former obscurity of his more prosperous rival; hence arises that aversion which many of this class feel at being reminded of the scenes of their early life. Yet the gifts of fortune are impartially distributed; here wit has no especial privileges, nor learning any advantages: the course is open to all, and the race not given to the swift alone. The ass which grazes the parish common may enter for the plate against the purest blood of Arabia, with equal chance of success.

Mr. Sherman was not one of those to whom the retrospect of past life gave any pain. During the revolutionary war, he was placed on a committee of congress to examine certain army accounts, among which was a contract for the supply of shoes. He informed the committee that the public had been defrauded, and that the charges were exorbitant, which he proved by specifying the cost of the leather and other materials, and of the workmanship. The minuteness with which this was done exciting some surprise, he informed the committee that he was by trade a shoemaker, and was perfectly acquainted with the cost of the article.

Recurring often to his early situation in life, he was sometimes accused of being vain of the obscurity of his origin; an implication which his contemporary, Dr. Franklin, did not escape. But he had too much good sense to pride himself

upon a circumstance which could never confer distinction. Honest industry is always respectable, but that employment which is the result of necessity, which is the lot of thousands, and which requires neither learning nor genius, can never excite our admiration or envy. He, no doubt, felt a justifiable pride when he reflected upon the race which he had run. Poor, and compelled to labour daily in the commencement of his career, he never lost sight of the importance of improving his mind : his talents and knowledge were daily expanding, and he gradually rose to the highest and most important situations in the country. From the eminence which he had attained, he probably contemplated, with complacency, that strength and vigour which enabled him to conquer the obstacles which presented themselves in his laborious ascent : severe indeed must be the moralist who would censure the gratification which the contemplation afforded.

At the time of his father's death, which occurred in the year 1741, Mr. Sherman was only nineteen years of age ; yet, from the absence of his elder brother, who had previously removed to New Milford in Connecticut, the principal charge of the family devolved upon him. At this early period of life, the care of his mother, who lived to a great age, and the education of a numerous family of brothers and sisters, brought into profitable action those feelings of filial piety and paternal affection, which are the unerring tokens of a virtuous and benevolent heart. The restrictions which had been placed on his own education, and the difficulties which they necessarily created, no doubt particularly impressed upon his mind the utility of liberal instruction in early life. The assistance subsequently afforded by him to two of his younger brothers, enabled them to obtain this incalculable advantage, and they became clergymen of some eminence in the colony of Connecticut.

He continued to reside at Newton about three years after the decease of his father, principally employed in the cultivation of the farm, and in otherwise providing for the maintenance of the family. It was then deemed advisable to dispose of the property at Newton, and they removed to New Milford, in Litchfield county, Connecticut, where he arrived and settled in June, 1743, being about twenty-two years of age. He there commenced business as a country merchant, and opened a store, in conjunction with his elder brother, which he continued until after his admission to the bar in 1754. He discontinued his trade as a shoemaker, at the time when this connexion was formed.

In 1745, two years after his removal into the colony of Connecticut, he was appointed a surveyor of lands for the county in which he resided, which is a proof of his early improvement in mathematical knowledge. His self-advancement in this important branch of education, so little connected with its actual occupations, or future prospects in life, serves to demonstrate the universal character of his studies, and the indefatigability of his literary ambition. Astronomical calculations of so early a date as the year 1748 have been discovered among his papers, made by him for an almanac then published in New York, and which he continued to supply for several successive years. In addition to these numerous vocations, his application to the study of the law must have been close and indefatigable, to enable him to surmount the disadvantages of his early education, and qualify himself for the profession which he was about to assume.

At the age of twenty-eight years, he married Miss Elizabeth Hartwell, of Stoughton in Massachusetts, by whom he had seven children. She died in October, 1760. After his removal to New Haven, he married Miss Rebecca Prescott of Danvers, Massachusetts, by whom he had eight children.

Although he had not profited by a regular professional education, his acquisition of legal knowledge, and his increasing reputation as a counsellor, were so great and flattering, that he was persuaded by his friends to adopt the profession, and was accordingly admitted an attorney at law, in December, 1754. At that early period the field of enterprise was small ; the profession of the law was the only path to distinction, and the surest road to wealth. Objects so desirable, and for the attainment of which men toil through life, attracted many to the bar. But in this profession, no factitious aid is available : talents may languish in obscurity for want of patronage, and friends may elevate the lawyer into notice, but the forum once attained, the candidate can sustain himself by his own resources alone. Men choose their associates on account of their companionable qualities, and their friends for the qualities of the heart ; but when their reputation is assailed or their property endangered, all partialities are suspended, and they rely on talents alone ; and ignorant must be the man who is mistaken in his choice. The theatre on which the lawyer acts is calculated at once for the display and improvement of his talents ; each scene is a species of intellectual gladiatorship, which, at the same time, extends his knowledge and his fame. It is, in truth, a noble profession : among its members were found the most able assertors of their country's rights, and they will continue to have a powerful influence amongst us, so long as the principles of a free constitution are permitted to exist. Yet this profession is not without its disadvantages, and its exercise is thought by many to have a more powerful effect in improving the intellectual than the moral qualities. The lawyer is accustomed to see man in his worst character. Surrounded by clients whose interests or resentments have triumphed over their sense of justice, or who seek from his

abilities impunity for their offences, he is perhaps too prone to make a low estimate of the moral principles of mankind. But whatever may be its influence on particular individuals, its study is eminently calculated to enlarge the understanding and improve the reason, and is "in its nature the noblest and most beneficial to mankind ; in its debasement, the most sordid and the most pernicious."

In 1755, he was placed in the commission of the peace for New Milford, and in the same year chosen by the freemen to represent them in the colonial assembly ; an appointment which he continued to hold during the greater part of his residence in that town.

The election of Mr. Sherman to the legislature of Connecticut, at the age of thirty-three years, was therefore the commencement of his public career. When we contemplate the preceding circumstances of his life ; the want of education ; the mechanical business to which he was placed ; the care and maintenance of a large family devolving upon a youth of nineteen years of age ; the prosecution of his trade until the age of twenty-two : and his subsequent employment within the narrow sphere of a country-store ; we may be enabled properly to estimate the industry and abilities which, notwithstanding the disadvantages necessarily arising from these respective situations, procured, in so short a period, his admission to the bar, his appointment as a magistrate, and his elevation to the colonial assembly.

He continued to practise the law with reputation until May, 1759, when he was appointed judge of the court of Common Pleas for the county. In 1761, he removed from New Milford, where he was highly and universally respected, and settled in New Haven. He was soon made a justice of the peace for the county of New Haven, and frequently represented the town in the legislature. In 1765, he was ap-

pointed one of the judges of the court of Common Pleas, and was for many years the treasurer of the college in New Haven, receiving at that time the honorary degree of master of arts.

In 1766, he was elected, by the freemen of the colony, an assistant ; i. e. a member of the council, or upper house in the legislature of Connecticut. The assistants, who, with the governor and lieutenant governor, formed a separate branch in the legislature, were twelve in number. As they deliberated with closed doors, the measures proposed or advocated by particular individuals cannot now be ascertained, but they are considered to have acted with great unanimity in the common cause.

The period of Mr. Sherman's election to the council, was peculiarly momentous : a partial revolution, about that time, took place in the colony, and several of the old members, who were suspected of not being sufficiently decided in their opposition to the new claims of the mother country, were obliged to retire, and give place to others who possessed different feelings.

The definitive treaty of peace, signed in Paris on the tenth of February, 1763, infused great and universal joy among the English colonies in America. The enemy which had caused them so many years of trouble and anxiety, and such an incredible expense of blood and treasure, was now incapable of inflicting further injury. The treaty was also favourable to them with respect to the extent of territory which is secured, and the security which it gave relative to their fisheries and commerce. Every colony had felt the ravages of the war, and the satisfaction universally produced by its successful termination was augmented by the reflection, that the conquest of Canada would deprive the Indians of that aid which had rendered them so often formidable, and prevent those

barbarous and devastating wars which had desolated their frontiers.

For nearly eight years they had been making the most strenuous exertions to prosecute the war, and to assist the British king in humbling the pride of their common enemy. The happy result of the contest, so anxiously desired by British America, had at length been effected by the union of British and American valour. They had co-operated in the same service, their blood had been mingled in the same plains, and the object pursued was common to both people. At no period of time was the attachment of the colonies to the mother country more strong, or more general, than at the termination of the French war. While the British nation was endeared to the American heart by the community of danger, and identity of interest, the brilliant achievements of the war had exalted to enthusiasm their admiration of British valour. They were proud of the land of their ancestors, and gloried in their descent from Englishmen. But this sentiment of admiration was not confined to the military character of the nation. A full portion of it was bestowed on their political institutions, and while the excellence of the British constitution was a rich theme of declamation in America, every man believed himself entitled to a large share of its advantages; nor could he admit, that by crossing the Atlantic, his ancestors had relinquished the essential rights of British subjects. Such was the general feeling, and happy state of the country, at the return of peace.

But the burthens and losses, particularly of the northern colonies, had been very great. New England, in general, had, during the war, ten thousand men in the field; and for some years, Massachusetts and Connecticut alone furnished that number. The quota of the former was five thousand five hundred men, which, during one year, they augmented

to seven thousand. Strenuous as were the exertions of Massachusetts in the common cause, they were exceeded by those of Connecticut.

In 1756 that colony sent into actual service more than double the number of men required by the commander in chief, and at one period, when they received information that Fort William was threatened with an attack, they had six thousand men in the field. The expense of this small commonwealth during the war, from 1755 to 1762 inclusive, after deducting the parliamentary grants, amounted to upwards of four hundred thousand pounds.

The colonies probably sustained the loss of more than twenty thousand men, who were, generally, their bravest and most active young men ; the flower of the country. This loss was severely felt in New England, which had furnished much the greatest number of men, and by no colony more than by Connecticut. A deliverance from these evils, and the return of parents, sons, and brothers, to the pleasures and endearments of domestic life, diffused joy and gladness in almost every family. The remembrance of former sufferings and triumphs, seem to have strengthened the ties by which they were bound to the mother country, and afforded the fairest prospects of a lasting union between them. But this prospect soon vanished, and the political horizon became darkened by those clouds which eventuated in a tempest that severed the two countries for ever.

Mr. Sherman commenced his public life as a member of the legislature, in the same year (1755,) that hostilities began in America, and continued to serve in that situation during the greater part of the war. Being thus practically acquainted with the extraordinary exertions of Connecticut during that period, and her proportionate loss of blood and treasure, he was rendered more sensible of the oppressive measures of

the British ministry, which almost immediately succeeded the return of peace. Having joined in the deliberations which preceded, and authorised, in his representative capacity, the execution of the various levies and appropriations for prosecuting the war, he could not, with the recollection of the distresses and expenses of the colony yet fresh in his mind, contemplate, without indignation, the claims made by the mother country, and the pretences for enforcing those claims. He had witnessed the exertions of the colony in the common cause; he saw that its resources were exhausted; and he felt the injustice and ingratitude of the charge of not having contributed its quota to the expenses of the war.

The power of parliament to tax the colonies appears never to have been doubted by those who guided the councils of Great Britain. An attempt had been made, previous to the French war, to confirm the supremacy of parliament, and its right to establish a system of internal taxation in this country. Had the attempt been then persisted in, it would probably have been for a time successful. The encroachments of the French had created universal alarm, and their influence with the numerous bands of Indians which surrounded our frontier plainly evinced, that a declaration of war would be followed by all the horrors and devastations of savage hostility. Under such circumstances, and with feelings of attachment to the mother country yet unimpaired, although the measure would have occasioned great discontent, it would probably not have been openly resisted. But there were many in Great Britain who, although they admitted the right, had great doubts of the policy of the measure. The parent state possessed a monopoly of the colonial trade; that trade was becoming every day more extensive and lucrative to the mother country; any measures which had a tendency to create disturbances in the colonies would be prejudicial to it;

and they were of opinion that the trifling sum which could be drawn from them by taxation, was not of sufficient consequence to justify an attempt which might interrupt that trade, and endanger the large debts owing by the colonies to British merchants. These reasons seem to have restrained the government from a direct attempt to enforce the right asserted by them, at that period ; but the pressure of the public debt of Great Britain at the close of the war with France, and the difficulty of providing funds for the payment of the interest, induced them soon after to adopt another policy, which laid the foundation of those disputes and animosities that severed the two countries.

When the aggressions of the French had apparently rendered war inevitable, the earl of Holderness, secretary of state, instructed the governors of the respective colonies to adopt certain preventive measures, at the same time recommending a meeting of commissioners from the several colonies to concert a plan of union and defence against the common enemy. The commissioners of the plantations accordingly directed a convention of delegates to meet at Albany in the summer of 1754, at which were assembled the governors and principal gentlemen of the several colonies. The commissioners from Connecticut were the honourable William Pitkin, Roger Wolcott, and Elisha Williams. The immediate object of the convention was to hold a conference with the five nations of Indians on the subject of French encroachments, and to secure their friendship in the approaching war. Governor Shirley, availing himself of this circumstance, had recommended to the several governors to instruct their commissioners on the subject of union ; but no direct authority for concerting any system of that nature was given by any of the governments, excepting those of Massachusetts and Maryland. It was, however, the unanimous opinion of the convention that an union of

the colonies was absolutely necessary for the common defence. A committee, consisting of one member from each colony, was directed to draw and report a plan of union. The essential principles of this plan, which was agreed to on the fourth of July, 1754, were to form a grand council, consisting of members chosen by the several assemblies, which council, with a governor general to be appointed by the crown, and to have a negative voice, should be empowered to make general laws ; to apportion the quotas of men and money to be raised by each colony ; determine the building of forts ; regulate the operations of armies ; and concert all measures for the common protection and safety. The delegates from Connecticut alone, but unanimously, opposed this plan. They contended that the powers proposed to be given to the governor general, an officer appointed by the crown and removable at pleasure, were too extensive, and might be employed to the subversion of their liberties ; that such a government would be incapable of acting with that promptness and vigour which, in time of war, the peculiar situation of our extensive frontier, and our system of warfare, required ; that it would not be so accurately acquainted with, or attentive to, the local situation and means of the different colonies, as to enable it to estimate and apportion the quotas of each with fairness ; and that it probably would create a much greater debt than would be incurred if the affairs of each continued to be conducted as heretofore.

When the Connecticut commissioners reported the plan to the general assembly at New Haven, held in October, it was strongly opposed, and at length totally rejected : they resolved that the limits of the proposed plan of union were too extensive to be beneficially administered, considered, conducted, and defended, by a president general and council ; that a defensive war, managed by such a government, having so large

a frontier, would prove ruinous to it ; that the proposed power might, in course of time, become hurtful and dangerous to his majesty's interests, and tend to subvert the liberties and privileges of the inhabitants of the colonies ; and that, consequently, no application should be made to the parliament of Great Britain, for an act to form any such government, on the plan proposed.

The alarm appears to have been very great and general throughout the colony, but was of short duration. The British ministry was quite as much opposed to the adoption of the plan of government proposed by the Albany convention, as the colony of Connecticut, but from very different, and much stronger, reasons. They thought, should it hereafter be determined to levy a tax on the colonies, that the object might be effected with less difficulty and danger whilst they were divided into numerous and distinct governments ; that neither of the colonies would venture openly to resist the measure without being assured of the co-operation of the others ; and that, in the existing state of the different governments, they possessed ample means of preventing such co-operation. Should such a union be sanctioned by the crown, a concert of measures could easily be established for the promotion of objects very different from the original and ostensible reasons upon which it was grounded : they therefore rejected the plan. This scheme does not appear to have been extensively approved in America. At that period the colonists had no idea of a separation from the mother country : many of them were attached to their local governments, and were fearful that the power granted to the proposed united government, might be applied to the infringement or subversion of their chartered rights. Its rejection, therefore, occasioned but little regret.

This plan being rendered abortive, the British minister devised another, more conformable to the principles and views

of the crown, and parliament of Great Britain ; and which, had it been adopted, would not only have recognised the right of taxation, but brought it into operation. It was recommended by him as a substitute for the articles of union digested and agreed on by the convention at Albany, and the principal features were, that the governors of the colonies, with one or two members of their councils, should form a convention to concert measures for the common defence, erect forts, and raise such numbers of men as they should judge necessary ; that they should draw on the British treasury for the sums necessary to supply their expenses ; and that these sums should be afterwards reimbursed by a tax to be levied on the colonies by act of parliament. A scheme of somewhat similar nature had been formed so early as the year 1739, and recommended to government by a number of American merchants, at the head of whom was Sir William Keith, governor of Pennsylvania. It proposed the levy of a body of regulars to be stationed along the western frontier for the protection of the Indian traders, the expense of which establishment was to be paid with monies arising from a duty on stamped paper and parchment, in all the colonies, to be imposed by parliament. This plan was not countenanced by the then minister, and it seems never to have been seriously taken up by the government until the year 1754, when a war, in which every part of the empire was deeply concerned, was about to commence.

The present ministerial scheme, being entirely subversive of all the opinions which prevailed in America, met with universal and decided disapprobation in the colonies. It was sent to governor Shirley, and by him communicated to Dr. Franklin, with the request that he would make known his opinion of the measure. Although that sagacious patriot had warmly advocated the plan proposed by the Albany conven-

tion, his ideas of the proposed substitute were totally different. He transmitted his sentiments in writing to the governor, and anticipated, with astonishing exactness, the substance of a controversy, which, for many years, employed the tongues, the swords, and the pens, of both countries. Other means were used to ascertain the temper and opinions of the colonists on the matter, which were discovered to be uniform and firm in opposition to the projected claim relative to the supremacy of parliament. The impolicy of introducing a measure, which would create much discussion and discontent in both countries, at a crisis which required all the exertions they were capable of making, caused the suspension of the measure; but the principle of some general power operating on the whole colonies, does not appear to have been abandoned. In fact, the language of men in power, on more than one occasion during the succeeding war, indicated a disposition to put this principle in operation, when the danger of the act should be diminished by the cessation of hostilities.

Mr. Sherman became a member of the Connecticut legislature soon after the relinquishment of this ministerial scheme to undermine the foundations of American liberty, and assisted in prosecuting the French war. As a man of deep reflection and solid judgment, the ill-concealed motives which prompted both the formation and abandonment of that measure, could not have escaped his attention. It was apparent that the British ministry only depended upon colonial legislatures in the execution of their plans, because it was not prudent, by any innovation, to irritate the colonies during a war in which, from local circumstances, their exertions were peculiarly necessary.

The prosperous termination of the contest, in 1763, afforded the British ministry an opportunity of renewing the claims which had been laid aside at its commencement, and

the unexampled expenses incurred in its prosecution offered a plausible plea for immediately carrying that system into effect. But at a time when the increasing population and trade of the colonies was adding to the wealth, and extending the manufactures, of Great Britain, and affording to the national means, an aid, which, though indirect, was more efficient than any sum which could be drawn from them by direct taxation, the British minister, whose sagacity this circumstance could not escape, would probably have avoided any measure tending to interrupt the amity which then subsisted, had not other circumstances compelled him to the adoption of that system of measures, which, after disturbing the harmony of the two countries for many years, terminated in a dismemberment of the empire. The national debt, at the conclusion of the war, exceeded one hundred and forty-eight millions, the annual interest of which was five millions, and this sum, so trifling in the estimation of British statesmen of the present day, was contemplated with dismay by the politicians of that period. The minister found great difficulty in discovering new sources of revenue, and every new tax proposed by him was strenuously opposed. In this dilemma, he renewed the plan of raising a revenue in the British colonies, from taxes laid by the parliament of the parent state.

In 1764 commenced that series of measures which "tore asunder all the bonds of relationship and affection which had for ages subsisted, and planted almost inextinguishable hatred in bosoms where the warmest friendship had been so long cultivated." During all this conflicting period, Mr. Sherman continued an influential member of the council of Connecticut, and co-operated with his fellow-members in the general opposition to parliamentary supremacy. Although the secret sittings of that body preclude the detail of his ser-

vices therein, and the precise rank which he held amongst his colleagues, we may fairly infer, from his appointment to the office of judge of the superior court, in May, 1766, that he eminently possessed the confidence of his fellow-citizens; and this preferment would not have been conferred on one who had not particularly distinguished himself in the common cause. His seat in the council was not vacated by this new appointment: he continued a member of it during nineteen years, at the expiration of which time a law was enacted rendering the two offices incompatible. Mr. Sherman preferred the station of judge, and continued in that office until the year 1789, when he resigned it in consequence of his election to congress under the federal constitution. It is uniformly acknowledged, by those who have witnessed his conduct and abilities on the bench, that he discovered, in the application of the principles of law, and the rules of evidence to the cases before him, the same sagacity that distinguished him as a legislator. His legal opinions were received with great deference by the profession, and their correctness was almost universally acknowledged. Thus, during the long period of twenty-three years, did a man, whose legal education was entirely the result of his private application, continue to hold one of the highest judicial stations of the country, with unimpeachable integrity, and universal approbation. During the last four years, the late chief justice Ellsworth was an associate judge of the same court, and, from the period of his appointment, in 1785, until the death of Mr. Sherman, a close intimacy, and free interchange of sentiment on all important questions, subsisted between them.

Mr. Sherman, at the first period of professional elevation, could not fail to recur with pleasing and grateful emotions to the moment when he, perhaps for the first time, appeared in the presence of a lawyer. for the purpose of procuring his

advice. A neighbour or acquaintance, in transacting some affairs relative to the family of a deceased person, required the assistance of legal counsel. As Mr. Sherman, then a young man, was going to the country town, he was commissioned to obtain it from an eminent lawyer. To prevent embarrassment, and secure the accurate representation of the case, he committed it to paper, as well as he could, before he left home. In stating the case, the gentleman with whom he was consulting, observed that Mr. Sherman frequently resorted to a manuscript which he held in his hand. As it was necessary to make an application, by way of petition, to the proper tribunal, he desired the paper to be left in his hands, provided it contained a statement of the case from which the petition might be framed. Mr. Sherman consented with reluctance, telling him that it was merely a memorandum drawn up by himself, for his own convenience. The lawyer, after reading it, remarked, with an expression of surprise, that, with a few alterations in form, it was equal to any petition which he could have prepared himself, and that no other was requisite. Having then made some inquiries relative to Mr. Sherman's situation and prospects in life, he advised him to devote his attention to the study of the law. But his circumstances and duties did not permit him to follow this counsel: the numerous family which the recent death of his father had made, in a considerable degree, dependent on him for their support and education, required his constant exertions in other employments. But the intimation which he then received, that his mind was fitted to higher pursuits, and that he probably possessed talents adapted to the transaction of public business, no doubt induced him, at that early part of life, to devote his leisure moments to those studies which led him to honour and distinction.

Mr. Sherman exerted himself, with great assiduity, in favour of the claims of Connecticut to certain lands now included within the limits of Pennsylvania ; these, as the former contended, were then covered by her original charter, which extended westward over all lands, not previously granted, to the shores of the Pacific ocean. In the year 1734, a number of persons commonly known by the name of the Susquehannah company, purchased, from the Six Nations of Indians, a large tract of country situated upon that river. This tract had been conveyed by James I. in November, 1620, to the duke of Lennox, the marquis of Buckingham, the earls of Arundel and Warwick, and divers other persons. On the nineteenth of March, 1631, the earl of Warwick, as president of the council of Plymouth, granted to lord Say and Seal, lord Brook, and others, "all that part of New England, which lies and extends itself from a river, there called Narragansett river, the space of forty leagues, upon a straight line, near the sea-shore, towards the south west, west and by south, as the coast lieth, towards Virginia, accounting three English miles to a league," and all the lands and hereditaments, within the breadth aforesaid, from the Atlantic ocean to the South seas. This territory had, in the preceding year, been granted to the earl of Warwick, and confirmed to him under the great seal of England. In 1662, it was again confirmed to the governor and company of the colony of Connecticut, by royal charter. The purchasers of the lands on the Susquehannah, therefore, believed, that the right of preemption was vested in the colony of Connecticut, to which they undoubtedly had been conveyed. The original grant of the Plymouth company was about eighty years before the grant to William Penn ; the grant to the earl of Warwick, and from him to lords Say and Seal, &c. fifty years ; and the confirmation of it by royal charter, to

Connecticut, nineteen years, prior to the conveyance to Mr. Penn.

Hence, in 1755, the Susquehannah company presented a petition to the general assembly, praying that, if it should be his majesty's pleasure to grant it, they might be formed into a distinct commonwealth : the petition was favourably received by the assembly, which acquiesced in the erection and settlement of a new colony, if it should be consistent with his majesty's pleasure, and recommended the petitioners to the royal favour.

At the time of the purchase, the lands at Wyoming were uninhabited either by English or Indian settlers ; and the Indian wars prevented their settlement for several years. In 1763, however, a number of persons from Connecticut established themselves upon the lands. In the same year, a petition was presented to the king by the agent of the company, stating their title to the lands which they had purchased, and praying his majesty to allow them to become colonists on the same, with such privileges, powers, and authorities, as he should be pleased to grant. The troubles between the two countries, and the commencement of the revolution, took place while this petition was pending, and the controversy was necessarily never determined by the crown.

The claims of Pennsylvania, and the powerful opposition of the proprietors, to the Connecticut settlers, induced the assembly, in May, 1770, to transmit a statement of the case to counsel in England. In 1773, they received the opinion of Messrs. Thurlow, Wedderburn, Jackson, and Dunning, the eminent and learned gentlemen who had been professionally consulted ; and, it being in favour of the colony's title, they resolved, in the October session, to assert their claim to the lands in question. Overtures were, at the same time, made to governor Penn, and the agents of the proprietaries

of Pennsylvania, relative to an amicable settlement of the boundaries of the respective provinces : or, if such a measure should be deemed preferable, it was proposed to join in an application to his majesty for the appointment of commissioners to settle the line. These propositions being rejected by governor Penn, the general assembly of Connecticut resolved, in January, 1774, to extend their jurisdiction to the settlers on the contested lands, and incorporated them into a town, by the name of Westmoreland, with the same privileges that the other towns in the colony enjoyed. This act was followed by a considerable tumult in Connecticut, as many of the inhabitants believed the claim of the colony to be totally unfounded. At a meeting of the committees of twenty-three towns, on the thirtieth of March, 1774, a strong petition and remonstrance were prepared, and presented to the general assembly. They urged that the measures adopted in favour of the Susquehannah company were of a very dangerous tendency, pregnant with mischief, derogatory to the honour and interest, and destructive to the peace, of the colony ; that it was contrary to all ancient precedent and usage, and entirely unconstitutional, to permit partial and interested individuals to vote upon their own case ; that, therefore, the proprietors of the Susquehannah company who were members of the assembly, and deeply interested in the questions discussed and determined, ought to be excluded from a voice in those matters ; that the assembly should reconsider their votes and doings, in relation to the lands of Wyoming ; and that the inhabitants of these lands should be suspended from voting, being represented, or otherwise acting as a part of the colony of Connecticut, until the question of the company's title should be settled, in a certain manner recommended by the petitioners. Both the party and their memorial were generally discountenanced, and even made the subject of banter and

ridicule. The legislature persevered in their measures, and the representatives of Westmoreland were admitted to a seat in the assembly. At this period, the ferment occasioned by the controversy between the two states, and the separate parties in Connecticut, was extremely great; the papers teemed with angry, virulent, and sarcastic essays, a specimen of which is extracted from the "Connecticut Journal" of April 8th, 1774.

"Advertisement.—A state race to be run for the royal plate, on which the arms of the colony are engraved, by the young nag, WESTMORELAND, against the old horse, CHARTER, at Hartford, on the second Wednesday of May next. It is said that very extraordinary bets are now laid, and in such a manner that every freeman in the colony is interested in the event. The Westmoreland is a horse of high *metal*, and long legg'd: it is thought he will run with great fury, and be crowded hard by his jockies, as they have of late been in top credit, and their all is now at stake. The Charter has been an excellent horse in his day; more valued for his good carriage and beautiful figure, than largeness of size; and, when mounted by a good rider that understands his temper, performed well, and scarce ever was distanced. However, he was forced into a race last season, by the Westmoreland sires, when not at all prepared: having been rid hard for several days before, he got worsted in the race, which almost exhausted his strength and spirits; but he now recruits daily, and it is thought, if he can have a good rider, and a number of friends on the spot to see that he has justice done him, he will perform as well as ever. It is said the affair is so contrived, that the Charter is to run a curve line, and the Westmoreland a direct longitudinal course, which gives the Westmoreland the advantage of at least one fifth part: this must be prevented before they start, and the Charter stripped of

all unreasonable burthens, else the chance will not be equal, and the Charter may get beat. If so, we must pay the losings, the old Charter become useless, and never fit to run another race. The importance of this race, as well as the public transactions of the day, will no doubt excite the curiosity of some thousands to be spectators."

Mr. Sherman had long taken an active part in the controversy, and maintained the Connecticut title, not in the flip-pant and trifling style, of which a specimen has been afforded, but with the dignity, and close reasoning, of an enlightened statesman. An address, written by him and inserted in the same paper, will not only evolve the bases upon which he had erected his opinion, but afford a fair view into the considerate and unostentatious manner in which he delivered his sentiments upon public questions :

"There has been much altercation of late concerning the doings of the honourable general assembly, relative to the western lands contained in our charter, and many false insinuations have been industriously circulated by some men, to prejudice the minds of the people against the assembly ; from what motives I shall not undertake to determine. It is hard to suppose that the good of the colony has been the motive, when the measures taken have the most direct tendency to its destruction ; for every *kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation*. I am sensible that the good people of the towns concerned in the late Middletown convention, have been greatly deceived and misled ; but I can't but wonder at their credulity in giving credit to an anonymous writer in a newspaper, whose character they knew nothing of, who in a most audacious, as well as false manner, has undertaken to impeach the integrity of the general assembly of the colony : But, as Luther once said, when he was condemned by the pope, he would appeal from the pope uninformed, to the pope

rightly informed, so I would take leave to inform the people of some facts which I know to be true, as to the doings of the general assembly relative to the matters in question, and then appeal to the people, whether the assembly hath not acted a wise and prudent part therein.

“In May, 1770, in consequence of a memorial preferred by more than four thousand of the freemen of the colony, (none of them interested in Susquehannah purchase,) praying the assembly to assert and support the claim of this colony to the lands contained in our charter, lying west of Delaware river, as they esteemed it to be a valuable interest which the governor and company held in trust for the freemen of the colony; the assembly, after mature deliberation, ordered a true and full state of the case to be laid before counsel learned in the law in England; accordingly the case was stated, and laid before four of the principal lawyers in the kingdom, who unanimously gave their opinion in favour of the title of the colony. And this measure was not taken by influence of the Susquehannah company, for the principal proprietors thought it a needless precaution, they having no doubt about the validity of the colony's claim.

“After the opinion of counsel was obtained, the assembly, in October last, by a very full vote, resolved to assert, and, in some proper way, support the colony's claims to said lands; and then appointed a committee to consider of proper measures to be taken for that end, who reported, for substance, all the resolutions since come into by the assembly, (the exercising of jurisdiction over the people settled there, not excepted,) which report was accepted in full assembly. A great clamour has been made about the assembly's suffering the members interested in the Susquehannah purchase to sit and vote in those matters; but that complaint I conceive, is without any just foundation. I was in the lower house in the year 1755, when the

assembly acted on the memorial of the Susquehannah company, and then all that were of the company, were excluded ;—and I understand that the same method has been taken by the house, at all times since, when any matter has been debated, or vote taken that concerned the peculiar interest of that company. But I don't remember any vote, taken by the assembly in October or January last, wherein they were particularly interested.

“The acts then passed, relative to the western lands, were such as concerned the colony in general ; and they could not, by any rule or principle of law or equity, have been excluded.

“The assembly considered the governor and company to be vested with the legal title to all the lands contained in our charter, lying between the rivers Delaware and Mississippi, except what the Indians are possessed of ; and no persons can acquire a title to any part of them by purchase from the Indians, without a grant of the assembly ; and the Susquehannah purchasers don't pretend that they have any legal title to any part of said lands. But, if the government avail themselves of their purchase of the native right, the purchasers will expect to be quieted in such a part of the land as will be an equitable compensation for their expense therein ; which must be determined by the assembly ; in which determination none of the company will be allowed to vote. If the idea here suggested is just, it will obviate the present difficulty suggested in the petition, drawn up and published by the convention at Middletown.

“They seem to make some further difficulty about exercising jurisdiction over the people of the town of Westmoreland, because, they say, the colony's title to those lands is contested. In answer to which, I would say, that it is not contested, but acknowledged, by the proprietaries of Pennsylvania, that the lands are contained within the original

boundaries of our charter, as may appear by a petition presented by them to the king in council, a few years ago : If it once belonged to the colony, and we have never yielded it up, nor have been divested of it by any judicial determination, what can be the mighty danger of exercising government over the people who claim the privilege of being under the jurisdiction of the colony ? I should think the greatest danger would be on the other hand ; if the colony claim a title to the lands as being within their charter, I don't see how they could excuse themselves in neglecting to govern the people settled on the lands, for their right of soil and of jurisdiction, by the charter, are commensurate. But it is further said, that the doings of the assembly will tempt great numbers of the people to settle on those lands, and if they should be evicted, they will be reduced to poverty, &c. But this is a groundless surmise ; for the assembly have caused a proclamation to be issued, expressly forbidding any more persons settling on said lands without leave first obtained from the assembly. As to their fears of what bloody tragedies may ensue from clashing jurisdictions, &c.—exercising jurisdiction was judged by the assembly the most likely measure to prevent all mischiefs of that kind, and to preserve peace and good order among the people.

“As to what the convention say concerning the title of the colony to the lands in question, that it is a matter of which they are not so competent judges, nor furnished with facts and documents by which a judgment might be made, and so are willing and desirous that the right of the colony to them, and the prudence and policy of asserting that right, should be judged of, and determined, by a disinterested assembly ; if this had gone to the whole of their proceedings, they would have done justice to the cause, and they would have merited the applause of their constituents. It is a little

extraordinary, when the colony has a cause to be tried, which all parties seem to think best should be tried, that those who profess to be so very zealous for the public good, should use every method in their power to defeat its success. Much has been said to alarm the people about the expense of a trial before the king and council. Governor Penn, in his late conference with our commissioners, says that an adversary suit can't occasion much delay or expense. I presume it would not cost more than one farthing on the pound in the list of this colony, to decide the question whether this colony joins to Pennsylvania or not ; and, if that is determined against us, there would be an end of the controversy ; but, if in our favour, a further expense would be incurred in fixing our south boundary, which could not amount to any great sum. Great part of the expense in the Mason cause was occasioned by the delay, because Mason was not able to carry it on. But the final decision of that cause in our favour furnishes us with an evidence of the safety of confiding in the integrity of that high court, when acting as a court of law. Mr. Ingersoll, in a piece lately published in the newspapers, says, ' a defeat will be very detrimental ; but a victory must be absolute ruin ; at least I think so.' But he gives no reason for his opinion ; and can his bare assertion make the people of this colony, who are a company of farmers, believe that to be quieted in their claim to a large tract of valuable land would ruin them ? I know some gentlemen, who love to monopolize wealth and power, think it best for lands to be in a few hands, and that the common people should be their tenants : but it will not be easy to persuade the people of this colony, who know the value of freedom, and of enjoying fee-simple estates, that it would be best for them to give up the lands acquired for them by their ancestors, for the privilege of enjoying the same lands as tenants under the proprietaries of Pennsylvania.

“The lands in question are situated about the centre, as to latitude, of the English territories in North America, in a healthy climate; and the soil is said to be generally very good; and there is enough purchased of the Indians to supply the inhabitants of this colony, that may want land to settle on, perhaps for half a century to come. They will be connected with us, and by sharing in our civil and religious privileges, will be under the best advantages to be virtuous and happy; and those who continue in this part of the colony, may be greatly benefited by monies that may be raised by the sale of those lands; and yet the purchasers have them on better terms than they can procure lands elsewhere; and if, in time to come, that part of the colony should be so populous as to render it inconvenient to be connected with this part of the colony in government, the crown would doubtless be ready, upon application, to constitute them a distinct colony.

“Thus I have given a short account of the doings of the assembly, and endeavoured to obviate the difficulties and misapprehensions which some people have laboured under, relative to the affair, and also to mention some of the advantages which may accrue to the colony by supporting their claim to the lands. And, as I have no interest in the affair but in common with every other freeman in the colony, nor any party views to serve, I am quite willing the freemen should show their minds, and determine it as they shall think best. About half the freemen have already manifested their desire to have the colony's claim supported; viz. the four thousand memorialists afore mentioned, and the Susquehannah and Delaware companies, which, I suppose, will amount to about one thousand more; and I hope the other freemen will not relinquish the colony's claim, without full information and mature deliberation, least they injure themselves, their brethren, and posterity. I think no more need be done but to choose

gentlemen of known virtue, integrity, and prudence, to be members of the next general assembly, who have approved themselves firm friends to our civil and religious liberties, and not embarrass them with petitions or instructions ; they will be under a solemn oath to act as, in their consciences, they shall judge most for the good of the colony, and that must be the only rule of their conduct."

In this considerate essay, no insidious attempts to conquer the judgment of the people by passionate appeals are observable : we find no rhetorical embellishments to gild over, and ornament, an attack upon the passions of the parties. The whole defence of the Connecticut claim, on the contrary, is studiously plain and simple, adapted to the comprehension of all classes of society, and abounding in close reasoning. The high standing of Mr. Sherman, his moral and political character, his offices of judge of the superior court, and of member of the council, no doubt conferred upon this address a popularity and influence, which contributed to tranquillize the minds of the people, and procure the re-election of the gentlemen of the upper house, or council, whom the malcontents, during the general ferment, had threatened with expulsion.

This unhappy contest, however, afterwards assumed a more alarming aspect, and continued to increase in violence, until it resulted in the shedding of blood, and the occupation of the lands in dispute, by the authority of congress. On the thirtieth of September, 1775, the assembly of Pennsylvania took into consideration " the intrusion of a number of people into this province, under a pretended claim of the colony of Connecticut, to the great annoyance of the good people of this province," and resolved that the delegates of the province should lay the same before congress, with a statement of the mischievous tendency of the measures pursued, and a desire of submitting the disputed claims to the decision of the king and

council. Congress referred the matter to a committee, consisting of the delegates from Pennsylvania and Connecticut ; but, on the fourteenth of October, the latter informed the congress that they had been unable to come to any agreement with the Pennsylvania delegates ; and, as the dispute had now proceeded to bloodshed, and might be attended with very dangerous consequences, they moved that a committee should be appointed, out of the other colonies, to take the matter into consideration. Messrs. J. Rutledge, Chase, Jefferson, Kinsey, and Hopkins, were accordingly nominated ; and congress recommended to the assemblies of Pennsylvania and Connecticut, to take the most speedy and effectual steps to prevent the hostilities which were, apparently, about to commence. Notwithstanding the reports of the committee, the disturbances at Wyoming continued, and sundry affidavits, corroborating the same, being laid before congress, it was recommended, (December 20th, 1775,) that, as the dispute, if not suspended during the existing troubles of the colonies, might be productive of pernicious consequences, very prejudicial to the common interest of the United Colonies, a cessation of hostilities between the contending parties should immediately take place, and every appearance of force be avoided, until the dispute could be legally decided. Various other salutary measures were recommended, and copies of the resolutions were forwarded to the respective parties. The assembly of Connecticut having prohibited any further settlements at Wyoming, without a license from that body, they were also urged not to introduce any settlers on those lands, until the further order of congress.

But the spirit of faction had become too strongly excited to be repressed by resolutions and recommendations, especially at a period when the constituted authorities rested upon a very fragile foundation. A renewed recommendation from con-

gress, in April, 1776, to the settlers at Wyoming, to cultivate harmony, and not to injure the happy union of the colonies by mutual acts of violence and oppression, having proved ineffectual, it was considered necessary to adopt more decisive measures. Accordingly, on the twenty-third of August, 1776, it was resolved that six companies should be raised in Pennsylvania, and posted along the frontiers of Northumberland, and parts adjacent; and that two companies should be raised in the town of Westmoreland, and stationed in proper places for the defence of the inhabitants. In December, 1780, the commander in chief was directed, if he should consider the post at Wyoming necessary, immediately to relieve the garrison there, by troops from the continental army, not belonging to the lines of Pennsylvania and Connecticut. At this period, the supplies on their way to Wyoming, were stopped, and congress was compelled to request the state of Pennsylvania, to permit them to be forwarded, in order to relieve the urgent distresses of the inhabitants. In October, 1782, it was resolved that the post at Wyoming should be retained, or withdrawn, by the commander in chief, as it should appear most beneficial to the United States.

Subsequent to the confederation of 1778, the supreme executive council of Pennsylvania prayed a hearing relative to the disputed territories, in conformity with the ninth article of that instrument, and the fourth Monday in June, 1781, was accordingly assigned for the appearance of the states of Pennsylvania and Connecticut, by their lawful agents. On the appointed day, Messrs. Bradford, Reed, Wilson, Sergeant, and Osborne. appeared on the part of Pennsylvania, and Mr. Dyer, only, on the part of Connecticut; his colleagues, Messrs. Johnson and Root, not having attended. After various difficulties, arising from the absence of the Connecticut commissioners; the consequent postponement of the proceed-

ings ; the attempts to incapacitate the representatives of the contending states from sitting and judging in the case ; the endeavours to postpone the decision until after the termination of the war ; the motions for declaring the reasons for the non-appearance of the Connecticut agents insufficient ; and the objections to the powers granted to those from Pennsylvania ; commissioners were at length chosen, on the eighth of August, 1782, to determine the controversy, and on the twenty-eighth of the same month, were formally commissioned by congress.

This court of commissioners, which has been already noticed in the life of Mr. Whipple, who was its president, having formed a quorum on the eighteenth of November, 1782, in the city of Trenton, continued their sittings from day to day until the thirtieth of December, when the arguments of the agents being concluded, judgment was pronounced in favour of Pennsylvania. The court was unanimously of opinion, that the state of Connecticut had no right to the lands in controversy, and that the jurisdiction and pre-emption of all the territory, lying within the charter boundary of Pennsylvania, and claimed by Connecticut, belonged of right to the former. Some difficulties subsequently occurred relative to claimants of private right of soil within the disputed district.

Although Connecticut was thus defeated in her claim to this particular territory, yet the assertion of her title was productive of large and lasting advantages, as it enabled her, at a subsequent period, to realize from the sale of certain lands, held by the same tenure, within the present limits of Ohio, the immense school fund of a million and a half dollars, which her citizens now enjoy.

In the controversy which arose between Great Britain and her colonies, Mr. Sherman was one of those who from the commencement of hostilities, foresaw the necessity of our

entire union and complete independence, and urged, with energy, the boldest and most decisive measures. He engaged in the defence of our liberties, not with the rash ardour of political enthusiasm, nor the ambitious zeal of a lover of popularity, but with the deliberate firmness of an experienced statesman, conscious of the magnitude of the undertaking, able to foresee dangers, resolute to meet them, and sagacious in devising the means of successful opposition. The revolutionary war was a contest of principles. When the period arrived, at which it was necessary either tamely to submit to the domination of the British parliament, surrender our property to its disposal, and sink to the degradation of a people conquered and enslaved, or boldly assert our rights and defend our liberties by the sword, he did not hesitate in choosing his alternative. He perceived that our hopes of reconciliation with Great Britain, or redress from appeals to the justice or humanity of her rulers, were vain; that our humble petitions were regarded only as proofs of timidity and conscious weakness; and that every instance of submission encouraged the confidence of our enemies, and was answered by fresh insult and injury.

In August 1774, the committee of correspondence accordingly nominated Mr. Sherman, in conjunction with Joseph Trumbull, Eliphalet Dyer, and Silas Deane, as proper persons to attend the general congress of the colonies, for the purpose of consulting and advising "on proper measures for advancing the best good of the colonies." Mr. Sherman, agreeably to this appointment, was present at the opening of the first congress; and it is an honour of which few can boast, that he invariably continued a member of congress until his death in 1793, embracing the long period of nineteen years, whenever the law, requiring a rotation in office, admitted it.

It is impossible to enumerate the various services rendered by Mr. Sherman during his congressional career. The novel and responsible situation to which he was now elevated was well calculated to elicit the firmness of his character, and the comprehensiveness of his political sagacity. Although he united his efforts to those of the assembled representatives, in their honest endeavours to preserve at once the peace of the country, and the rights of its citizens, he appears to have been decidedly convinced, that nothing but unconditional submission could avert the horrors of civil war; and he fully evinced, by the energetic measures which he zealously supported, that, in his opinion, it was far preferable to endure sorrow for a season, than sink into a long and degrading servitude.

As a representative and senator in congress, he appeared with distinguished reputation. Others were more admired for brilliancy of imagination, splendour of eloquence, and the graces of polished society; but there were few, even in that assemblage of eminent characters, whose judgment was more respected, or whose opinions were more influential. The boldness of his counsels, the decisive weight of his character, the steadiness of his principles, the inflexibility of his patriotism, his venerable appearance, and his republican manners, presented to the imagination the idea of a Roman senator, in the early and most exemplary days of the commonwealth.

In the business of committees, generally so arduous and fatiguing, he was undoubtedly one of the most serviceable and indefatigable members of that body. His unwearied application, the remarkable perseverance with which he pursued and completed the matters confided to his investigation, and the regular system by which all his proceedings were governed, when joined to his great prudence, acknow-

ledged talents, and unshaken virtue, attracted universal confidence; hence a large and important share of the public business, particularly when referred to committees, was assigned to him, in conjunction with other leading members of the house.

On the tenth of May, 1775, Mr. Sherman again appeared as one of the delegates from Connecticut, having been re-elected by the house of representatives of that colony, on the third of November, 1774.

At this period, the clouds which darkened the political horizon seemed momentarily to gather fresh gloom. The battle of Lexington, which occurred in the preceding month, had excited the strongest sensations; the commencement of hostilities by the king's troops, and the particular circumstances of the affair, were regarded as infamous, unconstitutional, and unnecessary. The duties of congress were now extremely arduous; and we cannot revert without deep emotions of gratitude and admiration, to the dignity and deliberative firmness of the assembled sages, who, in that day of peril, stood firm and fearless in defence of their liberties, and boldly breasted a shock which might have appalled the most resolute and daring. The matters which required their guidance and consideration; the dangerous measures which it was necessary to adopt; and the difficulties to be diverted, and surmounted; were numerous and embarrassing. The attack on Lexington; the capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point; the open commencement of hostilities; the addresses to his majesty, and to the inhabitants of England, Ireland, Canada, Jamaica, &c.; the prohibition of exports to those colonies which had not deputed members to congress; the interdiction of all supplies of provisions, and other necessities, to the British fisheries, the determination that no bills of exchange should be negotiated for, nor money supplied to,

a British officer, nor provisions or necessaries of any kind, to their army or navy; the organization of the militia; the recommendation to the state of New York, to repel force by force, to prevent the British from erecting fortifications, and to arm and train the militia for their own protection; the occupation of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, and the imprisonment of the British officer who had arrived to take the command of those posts; the suspension from office of the governor and lieutenant governor of Massachusetts bay, and the erection of a provisional government; the diligent preparations for war; the enactment of rules and regulations for the government of the army; the seizure of vessels bearing supplies to the British army and navy at Boston; the appointment of a commander in chief; the proper equipment of the army; the emission of continental currency; the interception of letters; the arrest of persons inimical to the cause; the fortification of Hudson's river; the fitting out of armed vessels to intercept supplies intended for the British; the license of privateers, &c. &c. All these were among the momentous matters which demanded the consideration, and tested the prudence, patriotism, and firmness, of the delegates, during the memorable sessions of 1775.

Among the principal committees, of which Mr. Sherman was a member during the year 1776, were those to prepare instructions for the operations of the army in Canada; to establish regulations and restrictions on the trade of the United Colonies; to regulate the currency of the country; to purchase and furnish supplies for the army; to devise ways and means for providing ten millions of dollars for the expenses of the current year; to concert a plan of military operations for the campaign of 1776; to prepare and digest a form of confederation; to repair to head-quarters, near New York,

and examine into the state of the army, and the best means of supplying their wants, &c. &c. &c.

The duty assigned to him, (September 20th, 1776,) relative to the state of the army, was arduous and distressing. On the twenty-fourth of that month, general Washington, in a communication to congress, exhibited, in a serious and solemn manner, the critical situation of America, the approaching dissolution of the army by the expiration of the time for which the troops had been engaged, and their urgent distresses, and increasing dissatisfaction.

Every principle of sound policy had required, that, as the continuance of the war was inevitable, it should be conducted in a different manner, and that the character of the parties should be changed : it was, indeed, a wise and well timed measure to destroy the relations of king and subject, by the Declaration of Independence, and thereby alter not only the name but the nature of the contest. On the eleventh of June, 1776, the high confidence placed in the abilities of Mr. Sherman was again amply proved by his appointment, in conjunction with that brilliant constellation of talents and patriotism, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, and Livingston, to prepare the Declaration of Independence.

Besides the incidental business in which his services as a committee-man were employed, he was successively a member of the board of war and ordnance, of the marine committee, and of the board of treasury. His financial knowledge, and systematic attention to the most rigorous rules of frugality in relation to public expenditures, which might appear inconsistent with the character and expanded views of more modern statesmen, was, in that day of national poverty and peril, of primary importance, and proved, in the aggregate, essentially beneficial to the interests of the country.

Notwithstanding his almost constant attention at the post of duty in the general congress, the citizens of Connecticut continued to load their distinguished representative with additional honours, and to testify, in the most flattering manner, their strong sense of his worth, virtues, and abilities. He was, during the war, a member of the governor's council of safety; and in February, 1784, when city privileges were granted to New Haven, he was elected to the office of mayor, which he held during the remainder of his life.

At the close of the revolutionary war, it became necessary to revise the statutes of Connecticut, and in May, 1783, Mr. Sherman, and the honourable Richard Law, both judges of the superior court, were appointed a committee, with instructions to digest all the statutes relating to the same subject, into one; to reduce the whole to a regular code, in alphabetical order, with such alterations, additions, exclusions and amendments, as they should deem expedient, and to submit the same to the general assembly. This arduous service was performed with great approbation: the temporary and repealed statutes were omitted; the arrangement was simplified and improved; and many valuable emendations and additions were introduced.

In 1787, he was appointed, by the state of Connecticut, a delegate to the general convention to form the federal constitution of the United States, in conjunction with Mr. Ellsworth and Dr. Johnson. The inefficacy of the old confederation for the preservation of the public peace, became palpable soon after the close of the war, when the strong and general excitement which existed during the struggle for independence, and bound the several states in close unity together, had yielded to less patriotic, and more selfish, considerations. The powers vested in the several states were too great to afford any prospect of permanent union, and it was only by

the formation of a supreme head, to direct the clashing measures, guard the opposing interests, and coerce the ill advised and dangerous views, of the several subordinate governments, that the independence and tranquillity which had succeeded one of the noblest efforts recorded in the political history of the world, could be preserved. It appears that Mr. Sherman discovered, at an early date, many radical defects in the old confederation, although he was a member of the committee by which it had been framed. A manuscript left among his papers, and containing a series of propositions prepared by him for the amendment of the old articles of confederation, the greater part of which are incorporated, in substance, in the new constitution, displays the important part which he acted in the general convention of 1787.

“That, in addition to the legislative powers vested in congress by the articles of confederation, the legislature of the United States be authorized to make laws to regulate the commerce of the United States with foreign nations, and among the several states in the union; to impose duties on foreign goods and commodities imported into the United States, and on papers passing through the post office, for raising a revenue, and to regulate the collection thereof, and apply the same to the payment of the debts due from the United States, and for supporting the government, and other necessary charges of the Union.

“To make laws binding on the people of the United States, and on the courts of law, and other magistrates and officers, civil and military, within the several states, in all cases which concern the common interests of the United States: but not to interfere with the government of the individual states, in matters of internal police which respect the government of such states only, and wherein the general welfare of the United States is not affected.

“That the laws of the United States ought, as far as may be consistent with the common interests of the Union, to be carried into execution by the judiciary and executive officers of the respective states, wherein the execution thereof is required.

“That the legislature of the United States be authorised to institute one supreme tribunal, and such other tribunals as they may judge necessary for the purpose aforesaid, and ascertain their respective powers and jurisdiction.

“That the legislatures of the individual states ought not to possess a right to emit bills of credit for a currency, or to make any tender laws for the payment or discharge of debts or contracts, in any manner different from the agreement of the parties, unless for payment of the value of the thing contracted for in current money, agreeably to the standard that shall be allowed by the legislature of the United States, or in any manner to obstruct or impede the recovery of debts, whereby the interests of foreigners, or the citizens of any other state, may be affected.”

“That the eighth article of the confederation ought to be amended, agreeably to the recommendation of congress of the — day — of (18 April, 1783).

“That, if any state shall refuse or neglect to furnish its quota of supplies, upon requisition made by the legislature of the United States, agreeably to the articles of the Union, that the said legislature be authorised to order the same to be levied and collected of the inhabitants of such state, and to make such rules and orders as may be necessary for that purpose.

“That the legislature of the United States have power to make laws for calling forth such aid from the people, from time to time, as may be necessary to assist the civil officers

in the execution of the laws of the United States ; and annex suitable penalties to be inflicted in case of disobedience.

“That no person shall be liable to be tried for any criminal offence, committed within any of the United States, in any other state than that wherein the offence shall be committed, nor be deprived of the privilege of trial by a jury, by virtue of any law of the United States.”

Mr. Sherman was not present at the opening, nor his colleague, Mr. Ellsworth, at the close, of the convention. Their absence was owing to necessity ; both being judges of the superior court, the presence of one of them was requisite at each of those periods. He was, however, as useful and conspicuous in that enlightened assemblage, as in the hall of congress ; he contributed, with his usual ability and perseverance, to reconcile the conflicting interests and opinions of the delegates, and perfect that towering monument of political wisdom, under the protection of which, the United States of America have enjoyed, for many years, a prosperity almost without example in the history of nations. Yet, notwithstanding the exalted characters of the framers of that constitution, and the experience of the benefits conferred by it on our country, the temerity, and restless disposition, of more modern politicians, are continually attempting alterations ; and there is reason to fear that this splendid edifice will, like some of the great architectural works of antiquity, be deformed by the presumptuous attempts of inferior artists to improve it. Many members of that august body, and among others, general Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, have borne testimony to the very considerable part which Mr. Sherman took in the debates of the convention. The correspondence which passed between him and the Hon. John Adams, relative to the federal constitution, must have been highly interesting, from the zealous feelings of the respective writers on the

subject, and the experience and abilities which enabled them to expatiate with clearness and precision upon a document, which, with the sole exception of the Declaration of Independence, ranks foremost in the records of our political existence ; which, if defeated, or rendered ineffectual by discord, would have probably rendered that Declaration, in a certain degree, unavailable ; and which, as it now subsists, will continue to uphold the great and glorious structure which rests upon its basis.

Soon after the convention had concluded its labours, Mr. Sherman expressed his opinion of the constitution which had been agreed upon, in a letter to general Floyd : "Perhaps," he remarks, "a better could not be made upon mere speculation : it was consented to by all the states present in convention, which is a circumstance in its favour, so far as any respect is due to them. If, upon experience, it should be found deficient, it provides an easy and peaceable mode of making amendments. If it should not be adopted, I think we shall be in deplorable circumstances. Our credit as a nation is sinking ; the resources of the country could not be drawn out to defend against a foreign invasion, nor the forces of the union to prevent a civil war. But if the constitution should be adopted, and the several states choose some of their wisest and best men, from time to time, to administer the government, I believe it will not want any amendment. I hope that kind Providence, which guarded these states through a dangerous and distressing war to peace and liberty, will still watch over them, and guide them in the way of safety."

Happily for our fathers, and happily for their posterity, the obstacles which threatened the rejection of the constitution were overcome, and the prophetic language of Mr. Sherman is now verified by ten millions of freemen.

His exertions in procuring the ratification of that constitution by the State Convention of Connecticut, were conspicuous and successful. He published a series of papers, with the signature of "A Citizen," which are said to have materially influenced the public mind in favour of its adoption ; a fact which is corroborated by the testimony of the late chief justice Ellsworth. The full majority, by which the ratification was determined in the convention of Connecticut, is stated, by a living witness, to have been owing, in a considerable degree, to the influence and arguments of Mr. Sherman. The instrument was discussed by sections, and the delegates to the general convention were required to explain their operation, as they successively came under consideration : this task was uniformly performed by him with great plainness and perspicuity.

After the ratification and adoption of the federal constitution, he was elected a representative of the state in congress, and on the eighth of April the oath required by that instrument was administered to him by the chief justice of the state of New York. As this office was then incompatible with his station as a judge, he resigned the latter, which he had held with unblemished reputation during twenty-three years.

Although verging towards the seventieth year of his age, Mr. Sherman's exertions, and interest in public affairs, continued undiminished. During the first two years of the sessions of congress under the new constitution, at the expiration of which he was elevated to the senate, he took an active part in the proceedings of that body. His sentiments, which were of great weight, were principally delivered in favour of an excise law, prudently and considerately administered ; of a duty on merchandize, rather than a direct tax ; of the existing mode of reporting plans by the secretary of the treasury ; of the propriety of appointing peculiar days of thanksgiving ; of the

commitment of the memorial of Friends, or Quakers, in relation to the abolition of slavery ; of the assumption of the state debts ; of the rights of conscience relative to bearing arms, &c. He strenuously opposed any discrimination in our relations with foreigners, urging that commercial restrictions should be met by commercial restrictions, but that the commerce of this nation, with any others, ought not to be laid under any disadvantages merely because we had no commercial treaty with them. The proper principle, he maintained, upon which government should act, was the impost of heavy duties upon all goods coming from any port or territory, to which the vessels of the United States were denied access.

After the exposition which has been given of the character and feelings of Mr. Sherman, it is almost superfluous to state that he was uniformly and conscientiously opposed to the slave trade. Soon after the commencement of the first session of congress, Mr. Parker, of Virginia, made an effort to discountenance that inhuman traffic, by moving the insertion of a clause in the impost bill, then under consideration, imposing a duty on the importation of slaves of ten dollars on each individual. His exertions were confined to this narrow compass by the fifth article of the new constitution, which deprived congress of any power to prohibit the importation of slaves before the expiration of twenty-one years ; but the first clause of the ninth section of the first article authorised the imposition of a duty on each person, not exceeding the amount proposed by Mr. Parker. Although Mr. Sherman fully approved of the object of the motion, he could not reconcile himself to the insertion of human beings, as an article of duty, among goods, wares, and merchandize. He considered the principles of the motion, and those of the bill, as inconsistent ; the purpose of the first was to raise a revenue, and of the latter, to correct a moral evil ; and, therefore, he believed that the motion ought,

on the principles both of humanity and policy, to be separately considered. On the eleventh of February, 1790, the address of the people called Quakers was presented to the house, when a long debate ensued upon the propriety of its being referred to a committee. It related exclusively to the "licentious wickedness of the African trade for slaves," and was intended to excite the christian endeavours of the congress to remove that reproach from the land. The opponents to those incipient exertions of humanity, were happily few in number ; but they, in some degree, compensated this deficiency, by the violence of their sentiments, so strongly and unfavourably contrasted with the cool and conscientious defence of oppressed and degraded humanity. Those who particularly signalized themselves in this opposition, and who, no doubt, from the prejudice of education, belieyed they were performing a duty which they owed to their constituents, were Messrs. Jackson, of Georgia ; Smith, Burke, and Tucker, of South Carolina ; and Stone, of Maryland. Mr. Jackson, in the course of debate, animadverted, with undeserved and unbecoming acrimony, on the respectable society that had preferred the address. He believed that his slaveholding constituents were quite as useful and good citizens, quite as friendly to the revolution, and quite as susceptible of the refined sensations of humanity and benevolence, as the petitioners ; that congress needed no advisers if they were disposed to interfere in the importation of slaves ; that the abolition of the slave trade would evince to the people a disposition towards a total emancipation, and they would hold their property in jeopardy ; that the situation of the slaves in America was not worse than it was in Africa, &c. As it regarded the calm and benevolent mediation of the society of friends, he sarcastically inquired why the second reading of their petition should be immediately demanded ? whether it was because the feelings of friends would be

hurt by having their affair conducted in the usual course of business? "I would beg," said he, "to ask those who are so desirous of freeing the negroes, if they have funds sufficient to pay for them? If they have, they may come forward on that business, with some propriety; but if they have not, they should keep themselves quiet, and not interfere with a business in which they are not interested. Sir," he continued, "is the whole morality of the United States confined to the quakers? Are they the only people whose feelings are to be consulted on this occasion? Is it to them we owe our present happiness? Was it they who formed the constitution? Did they, by their arms, or contributions, establish our independence? Why do these men set themselves up, in such a particular manner, against slavery? Do they understand the rights of mankind, and the disposition of Providence, better than others? If they were to consult that book, which claims our regard, they will find that slavery is not only allowed, but commended: their Saviour, who possessed more benevolence and commiseration than they pretend to, has allowed of it; and, if they fully examine the subject, they will find, that slavery has been no novel doctrine since the days of Cain." But this member appears to have been singularly happy in that art, which has of late become so injuriously general, of adapting the passages of Holy Writ to temporary transactions. He had, some time before, sagaciously compared the delegates from the states of Pennsylvania and Maryland to the counsellors of Rehoboam; he had denounced the sounding titles which were trumpeted in his ears, and "which," said he, "ten years since would have exalted a man to a station, as high as Haman's gibbet;" he had ridiculed, with fearful levity, the echoing of these titles by the papers of Boston, "a town which, fifteen years ago, acknowledged no lord but the Lord God of Hosts!" and now, he defended the most

abominable and blood-thirsty traffic that ever roused the capidity of man, by an appeal to the Redeemer, and to the word of God !

Whether the rapid succession of interrogatories bewildered the senses of his hearers, or the gravamen of their composition did not entitle them to a serious reply, the observations of Mr. Jackson were unable to produce a correspondent excitement among the enemies to slavery. Mr. Scott, indeed, of Pennsylvania, animadverted, with proper warmth, upon the odious importation of those wretched beings, and concluded an eloquent appeal to the humanity and justice of the house, by observing, that "he did not know how far he might go, if he were one of the judges of the United States, and those people were to come before him, and claim their emancipation." Mr. Jackson, after stating that, according to the evidence, from Genesis to Revelations, upon which the Christian system was founded, religion was not opposed to slavery, and strongly depicting the impolicy of kindling a civil war in the south, used the following menacing language in relation to the concluding observation of Mr. Scott : "The gentleman says, if he was a federal judge, he does not know to what length he would go in emancipating these people ; but, I believe, his judgment would be of short duration in Georgia ; and, perhaps, even the existence of such a judge might be in danger." At this moment, Mr. Sherman displayed that remarkable prudence and promptitude which had so often enabled him, without a suspicion of his real design, to calm the discord of public meetings : he offered no reply to the inconsiderate declamation which corresponded so little with the dignity of legislation, well aware that opposition would merely serve to inflame passions which had already burst the bonds of reason, and that conciliation was much more efficacious than controversy. With his usual calmness, he there-

fore simply remarked, that it was probable the committee would understand their business, and they might, perhaps, bring in such a report as would be satisfactory to gentlemen on both sides of the house. Probably it was from the striking contrast, thus presented to the house, that Mr. Jackson took no further part in the debate. Mr. Burke, of South Carolina, even surpassed the gentleman from Georgia, in harshness and disrespect relative to the quaker petitioners. Speaking of the committee from that respectable society, then present in congress, he observed, that "the men in the gallery had come there to meddle in a business with which they had nothing to do; they were volunteering in the cause of others, who neither expected nor desired it." He also charitably believed, that the quakers had no more religion than any other people, "nor perhaps so much, if they were examined to the bottom, notwithstanding their outward pretences." However, notwithstanding the exertions of their opponents—men who had themselves so lately shaken off the yoke of servitude—Mr. Sherman and his colleagues were triumphant, and the question was favourably determined, forty-three members having supported, and only eleven opposed, the commitment of the memorial.

In the course of the debate on the impost bill, (May 9th, 1789,) several members had recourse to popular opinion in support of their arguments, which drew from Mr. Sherman the following remarks: "Popular opinion is founded in justice, and the only way to know if the popular opinion is in favour of a measure, is to examine whether it is just and right in itself. I believe that whatever is just and right, the people will judge of and comply with. The people wish that the government may derive respect from the justice of its measures, and they have given it support on that account. I believe the popular opinion is in favour of raising a revenue

to pay our debts, and if we do right, they will not neglect their duty; therefore, the arguments that are urged in favour of a low duty, will prove that the people are contented with what the bill proposes. When gentlemen have recourse to public opinion to support their arguments, they generally find means to accommodate it to their own : the reason why I think public opinion is in favour of the present measure, is because this regulation, in itself, is reasonable and just."

He uniformly and zealously opposed those amendments of the constitution which were, at different periods, submitted to the house, almost immediately after its adoption. He maintained that the more important objects of government ought first to be attended to ; and that the executive portion of it needed organization, as well as the business of the revenue, and of the judiciary. "I do not suppose," said he, "the constitution to be perfect, nor do I imagine, if congress and all the legislatures on the continent were to revise it, that their united labours would make it perfect. I do not expect any perfection, on this side the grave, in the works of man ; but my opinion is, that we are not, at present, in circumstances to make it better. It is a wonder that there has been such unanimity in adopting it, considering the ordeal it had to undergo ; and the unanimity which prevailed at its formation, is equally astonishing : among all the members from the twelve states, present at the federal convention, there were only three who did not sign the instrument, to attest their opinion of its goodness. Of the eleven states who have received it, the majority have ratified it without proposing a single amendment : this circumstance leads me to suppose, that we shall not be able to propose any alterations that are likely to be adopted by nine states ; and gentlemen know, that before the alterations take effect, they must be agreed to by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states in the union."

His endeavours, however, to postpone the consideration of these amendments, until the more important matters of government were arranged, and experience had tested the efficacy, and weak points, of the constitution, were unsuccessful. He then directed his attention to the mode of amendment proposed, and earnestly opposed the insertion, or abstraction, of any part whatever, of the original instrument. "We ought not," he exclaimed, "to interweave our propositions in the work itself, because it will be destructive of the whole fabric. We might as well endeavour to mix brass, iron, and clay, as to incorporate such heterogeneous articles ; the one contradictory to the other. Its absurdity will be discovered by comparing it with a law : would any legislature endeavour to introduce into a former act a subsequent amendment, and let them stand so connected ? When an alteration is made in an act, it is done by way of supplement ; the latter act always repealing the former in every specified case of difference."

A proposition having been made to introduce a clause into the constitution, conferring upon the people the unalienable right of instructing their representatives, Mr. Sherman opposed it with great justice and ability. He urged that it would mislead the people, by conveying an idea that they possessed the right of controlling the debates of the legislature, a right destructive to the object of their meeting ; that the duty of a representative was to consult, and agree with others, from the different parts of the union, relative to such acts as might be beneficial to the whole community ; that, if they were to be guided by instructions, there would be no use in deliberation, and a representative would consider nothing more necessary than to produce those instructions, lay them on the table, and let them speak for him ; that the duty of a good representative was to inquire what measures would best tend to promote the general welfare, and, after he

had discovered, to give them his support ; that, if his instructions should coincide with his ideas of any measure, they would be unnecessary, and, if they were contrary to the conviction of his own mind, he would be bound by every principle of justice to disregard them. Hence he considered it a fixed doctrine, that the right of the people to consult for the common good, can go no further than to petition the legislature for a redress of grievances. His opinion was confirmed by a large majority.

Mr. Sherman strongly advocated the funding system reported by Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the treasury, and particularly the assumption of the state debts, which formed a part of it.

In 1791, a vacancy having occurred in the senate of the United States, he was elected to fill that elevated station, in which he continued to devote his time and talents to the benefit of that government whose cause he had firmly espoused, and whose independence he had fearlessly proclaimed, fifteen years before.

On the twenty-third day of July, 1793, this great and good man was gathered to his fathers, after a long life of usefulness and virtue. He sustained many and important offices with uniform honour and reputation ; he maintained an amiable character in every private relation ; and he died in a ripe old age, fully possessed of all his honours, and of his powers both of mind and body. The loss of such a man was indeed great. It was great to the whole country, for he was still capable of eminent usefulness ; it was great to the state of Connecticut, in whose service he had, for half a century, been indefatigable ; it was great to the city of New Haven, of which he was the chief magistrate ; it was still greater to the church and the society, of which he was so eminent and useful a member ; but greatest of all to his bereaved family.

The following inscription is recorded upon the tablet which covers his tomb:

In memory of
THE HON. ROGER SHERMAN, Esq.
Mayor of the City of New Haven,
and Senator of the United States.
He was born at Newton, in Massachusetts,
April 19th, 1721,
And died in New Haven, July 23d, A. D. 1793,
aged LXXII.
Possessed of a strong, clear, penetrating mind,
and singular perseverance,
He became the self-taught scholar,
eminent for jurisprudence and policy.
He was nineteen years an assistant,
and twenty-three years a judge, of the superior court,
in high reputation.
He was a delegate in the first congress,
Signed the glorious act of Independence,
and many years displayed superior talents and ability
in the national legislature.
He was a member of the general convention,
approved the federal constitution,
And served his country with fidelity and honour,
in the House of Representatives,
and in the Senate of the United States.
He was a man of approved integrity;
a cool, discerning Judge;
a prudent, sagacious politician;
a true, faithful, and firm patriot.
He ever adorned
the profession of christianity

which he made in youth ;
and, distinguished through life
for public usefulness,
died in the prospect
of a blessed immortality.

As a theologian, Mr. Sherman was capable of conversing on the most important subjects, with reputation to himself, and improvement to others: that eminent divine, the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, acknowledged, that, in the general course of a long and intimate acquaintance, he was materially instructed by his observations on the principal subjects of doctrinal and practical divinity. As an avowed professor of religion, he did not hesitate to appear openly in its defence, and maintain the peculiar doctrines of grace. He was exemplary in attending all the institutions of the gospel, in the practice of virtue in general, and in showing himself friendly to all good men. Hence, in his death, virtue, religion, and good men, sustained the loss of a sincere, an able, and a bold advocate.

When he resided at home, he was accustomed, as a peculiar gratification, to retire to his closet, and commit his thoughts to writing, or extract from books the wisdom of other times. His mind was always employed; and those hours which were not interrupted by business, or public engagements, were generally devoted to reading and contemplation. The volume which he consulted most especially, was the Bible: it was his custom to purchase a Bible at the commencement of every session of congress, to peruse it daily, and to present it to one of his children on his return. To his familiar acquaintance with the pages of inspiration may be attributed much of that extraordinary sagacity which he uniformly exhibited. Although each day furnished its season

for study and meditation, probably no member of congress attended more thoroughly and laboriously to public affairs than Mr. Sherman. Every measure of importance received his deliberate attention, and in regard to them all he felt a solemn responsibility.

He was extensively engaged in epistolary writing, on abstruse points in divinity and metaphysics, with clergymen of the first eminence, whom he greatly loved and respected. Whenever the scriptures led him to conclusions different from those of his correspondents, his friendship and regard for them suffered no diminution. Among them were Dr. Edwards, Dr. Hopkins, Dr. Trumbull, president Dickinson, president Witherspoon, Dr. Johnson, of Connecticut, and many others. Besides theological investigations, the common topics of that revolutionary period, and any others which related to the prosperity of this country, were freely introduced.

The genius and talents of Mr. Sherman were particularly calculated for eminent usefulness in the judiciary department. Cool, attentive, deliberate, and impartial, skilled in all the forms and principles of law, he was not liable to be misled by the arts of sophistry, or the warmth of declamation. He formed his opinions on a careful examination of every subject, and delivered them with dignity and perspicuity. His decisions were too firmly founded on correct and admitted principles to be readily shaken, and he necessarily enjoyed, in his important judicial station, a confidence and esteem, highly honourable to himself, as well as to the professional gentlemen by whom those sentiments were entertained. But although the testimonies of individuals, whose profession and opportunities enabled them to decide, with peculiar exactness, upon the judicial character of Mr. Sherman, are almost affirmatively unanimous, yet that unanimity was not confined to the limits of the forum. The public at large, and especially

that portion of it, which, during the long period that he held his official station, had been interested in the proceedings of the court, entertained the same sentiments in relation to his abilities, his purity, and his integrity.

It is improbable, indeed, that a man, whose early youth had been systematically employed in the acquisition of knowledge and the practice of important private duties, and whose maturer years had been devoted to ripening the inestimable germe, could, in any situation of life, have wilfully acted otherwise than right. At that critical period in the life of man, when his passions are most untractable, and his reason least effective; when experience has not taught him to avoid the quick sands and temptations of the world; without the fostering hand of a father to regulate his conduct, or the curb of education to check his evil propensities; at that eventful period, when the tenor of his earthly pilgrimage is, perhaps, conclusively established—Roger Sherman planted, in a fertile soil, those seeds of virtue which bloomed forth in a rich and luxuriant harvest. He resisted the allurements, and escaped the snares, which afflict and beset the progress of human nature: he buffeted the temptations which throng, in countless swarms, around the path of the young and inexperienced; and he triumphantly conquered a constitutional effervescence of the passions, which might have led a less energetic mind into misery and disgrace. In his early days, he imbibed a remarkable inclination for reading, and studious meditation; a propensity which, if diligently pursued, stamps an honourable character upon youth, even before the embers which they are feeding have been fanned into a flame. Mr. Sherman remarked to his family, that before he had attained the age of twenty-one years, he learned to control and govern his passions; and this great and important achievement, he ascribed, in a considerable degree, to the perusal of Dr.

Watts's excellent treatise upon that subject. It cannot be denied that his success in this momentous contest, upon the issue of which all his best and dearest interests were at stake, was certain and decisive. His passions were naturally strong; but notwithstanding the vehemence of feeling thus originally planted in his breast, he was habitually calm, sedate, and self-governed; mild and agreeable in society; universally benevolent in his regards towards his fellow-men.

The foundation of his usefulness as a man, and his distinction as a statesman, was *integrity*, which, at an early period, formed one of the principal groundworks of his character, and was founded upon religious principle. All his actions seem to have been preceded by a rigorous self-examination, and the secret interrogatories of "*What is right?*"—" *What course ought I to pursue?*" He never propounded to himself the questions of "*How will it affect my interest?*"—" *Will it be popular?*" Hence his reputation for integrity was so unquestionable, that, in all the various decisions of public questions in which he had a voice, it is not probable that any man suspected him of a selfish bias, or of sinister motives, however strongly he may have been opposed to the measures which Mr. Sherman considered it his duty to support. This high quality, which is one of the most essential supports of religion and morality, and without which, no redeeming virtues can elevate man from his abasement, will at least, in some degree, account for the extraordinary influence which he enjoyed in deliberative bodies. He possessed the essential requisite of an orator, mentioned by Cicero; he was universally considered, and was in fact, *a good man*. When he reasoned, and expressed his opinion of any subject, no apprehensions were entertained by his hearers that any thing was concealed with a view to mislead, or that one reason was assigned, while a different one influenced his decision. Hence

the arguments which appeared satisfactory to his own dispassionate judgment produced a powerful effect, and were peculiarly qualified, as well from their nature as the source from which they proceeded, to satisfy the minds of others. Many anecdotes attest the unbounded confidence which was entertained for the judgment of Mr. Sherman. Fisher Ames was accustomed to express his opinion by saying, "That if he happened to be out of his seat when a subject was discussed, and came in when the question was about to be taken, he always felt safe in voting as Mr. Sherman did; *for he always voted right.*" The late Dr. Spring, of Newburyport, was returning from the south, while congress was sitting in Philadelphia. Mr. Jefferson accompanied him to the hall, and designated several distinguished members of that body: in the course of this polite attention, he pointed in a certain direction, and exclaimed, "That is Mr. Sherman, of Connecticut, a man who never said a foolish thing in his life." Mr. Macon, now a distinguished member of the senate of the United States, once remarked to Mr. Reed, of Marblehead, formerly a member of congress, that "Roger Sherman had more common sense than any man he ever knew." Washington uniformly treated Mr. Sherman with great respect and attention, and gave undoubted proof that he regarded his public services as eminently valuable. The late Dr. Edwards, one of the most eminent divines which this country has produced, was accustomed to speak of him under the appellation of "my great and good friend, senator Sherman." As this eulogium was contained in the most confidential, and unreserved, correspondence, with persons beyond the Atlantic, it may be considered as the most decided and impartial testimony to superior worth. The late Dr. Dwight, when instructing the senior class at Yale College, observed, that Mr. Sherman was remarkable for not speaking in debate

without suggesting something new and important, which frequently gave a different character to the discussion. He also remarked, that he had acquired one of the rarest attainments in English composition, being the accurate use of the particles in our language : this circumstance is the more remarkable, as he was almost entirely self taught.

A patriot, to whose virtues, talents, and integrity, the three first presidents of the United States, WASHINGTON, ADAMS, and JEFFERSON, and the wisest and best men of the land, have paid the tribute of esteem and respect, cannot fail to live long in the hearts of his countrymen. In a communication received by the editor, from the venerable John Adams, dated the nineteenth of November, 1822, that distinguished statesman thus expresses his sentiments in relation to Mr. Sherman :

“Dear Sir ; I have received your obliging favour of the fifteenth instant. It relates to a subject dear to my memory and my heart. The honourable Roger Sherman was one of the most cordial friends which I ever had in my life. Destitute of all literary and scientific education, but such as he acquired by his own exertions, he was one of the most sensible men in the world. The clearest head and the steadiest heart. It is praise enough to say, that the late chief justice Ellsworth told me that he had made Mr. Sherman his model in his youth. Indeed I never knew two men more alike, except that the chief justice had the advantage of a liberal education, and somewhat more extensive reading.

“Mr. Sherman was born in the state of Massachusetts, and was one of the soundest and strongest pillars of the revolution.”

The testimony of Mr. Jefferson is not less emphatic : in a letter of the ninth of March, 1822, addressed by that eminent citizen to the grandson of Mr. Sherman, he fully unites

in the eulogiums which appear universally and deservedly to have been lavished on the subject of this sketch:

"I have duly received," he says, "your letter of February twenty-second, and am sorry it is in my power to furnish no other materials for the biography of your very respectable grandfather, than such as are very generally known. I served with him in the old congress, in the years 1775 and 1776: he was a very able and logical debater in that body, steady in the principles of the revolution, always at the post of duty, much employed in the business of committees, and, particularly, was of the committee of Dr. Franklin, Mr. J. Adams, Mr. Livingston, and myself, for preparing the Declaration of Independence. Being much my senior in years, our intercourse was chiefly in the line of our duties. I had a very great respect for him, and now learn, with pleasure, that the public are likely to be put in possession of the particulars of his useful life."

Although the qualifications of Mr. Sherman were widely extended, his abilities appeared most conspicuous in political affairs. He was enabled, in this career, to attain great usefulness and excellence, not only by his acute discernment and sound judgment, but especially by his knowledge of human nature. He possessed a happy facility in discriminating between feasible and impracticable measures, and judging what men would bear, and what they would not bear, in government. His prudence, or skill in timing and adapting his measures to the attainment of his end, was not less rare and admirable. The possession of this talent, his perseverance and indefatigable application, united with his general good sense, and unblemished integrity, enabled him, in most cases, to procure the adoption of any measure, which, in his opinion, would promote the prosperity of the country. As a statesman, he was not only distinguished for his integrity and dis-

cernment, but for his accurate knowledge of the history of our country, its former political and military transactions, and the situation and exigencies of the people for whom he was appointed to legislate.

In a popular assembly, he possessed peculiar talents in debate ; but his speech is said to have been slow and hesitating, especially at the commencement. He never possessed the graces of oratory, yet few men were heard with more profound attention. The causes which created this fixed and flattering attention were weighty and palpable : it appears, that he never spoke without having something relative to say ; that what he said was always to the purpose ; that it was easily understood, and easily applied ; that it contained good sense, unmixed with sophistry, and unperverted by fancy ; and that it proceeded from an honest and upright mind, solely bent upon promoting the public good. Plain, perspicuous, and concise, in his language, disdaining all recourse to rhetorical embellishment, or those arts by which the orator attempts to sway the judgment of his audience by interesting their passions, or imposing on their understandings, he exerted a commanding influence by the strength of his reasonings, the extent of his knowledge, and the weight of his character and opinions. At the commencement of the contest with Great Britain, in the frequent meetings and conventions of the people to consult upon the measures to be adopted—at times, when the passions of the multitude were inflamed by the violence of party altercation, and deliberation had given place to denunciations and threats, he was accustomed to rise with his usual gravity, and by a simple statement of facts, or of the real point of discussion, or sometimes by merely proposing some important question to their consideration, give a new turn to the whole debate, and render all their previous harangues, and laboured arguments, impertinent and inconsequential.

It ought to be recorded in the biography of this eminent and excellent man, that although he sustained so many different stations in civil government, to all of which he was promoted by the free election of his fellow-citizens, and in the greater part of which he could not, without a new election, continue longer than a year, and in the remainder he could not, without re-appointment, continue longer than two, three, or four years ;—and, although, for all these stations, there were, as will always be the case in popular governments, many competitors at every election ;—yet Mr. Sherman was never removed from a single office, except by promotion, or by act of the legislature, requiring a rotation, or rendering the offices incompatible with each other. Nor, with the restrictions alluded to, did he ever fail in his re-election to any situation to which he had been once elected, excepting that of representative of New Haven in the legislature of the state ; which office, at that period, was constantly fluctuating. Few facts can more decisively show how eminently and invariably he possessed the confidence of his fellow-citizens.

Mr. Sherman possessed, in a remarkable degree, a public spirit of the most enlarged and purest nature : it was constantly manifest in a vast variety of changing circumstances. It is a quality of the highest importance in the character of a republican ruler, and was possessed by the members of congress, during the revolution, to an extent almost unparalleled in the political history of the world. With those great and honourable men, the common cause,—the public good,—was the subject of continual solicitude. They were willing to bear much more than their portion of labour and responsibility, and to suffer, with genuine magnanimity, their full share of the hazard and loss, to which the mighty struggle in which they were engaged rendered them liable. They displayed a superiority to the common motives of politicians, which was

truly admirable, and they may, as a body, be safely pronounced better models for imitation by future statesmen, than can elsewhere be found.

If the contemporaries of Mr. Sherman had been requested to state what they considered as his predominant characteristic, or that which distinguished him from men of more popular talents and equal purity of intention, they would probably have exclaimed, with one voice, his practical wisdom. Without the possession of this knowledge, however excellent his character might have been in other respects, he never could have acquired the influence which every where attended him ; an influence equally acknowledged in the hall of legislation, in the deliberations of committees, on the bench of justice, in the private circle, and among his immediate neighbours, and his townsmen. The practical wisdom, which is now understood, was sound common sense, applied to public questions. It fixed upon the best attainable ends, and resolutely pursued them : it selected the most efficient means, and made the most judicious use of them : it consisted of a thorough acquaintance with the character of man ; a willingness to be taught by experience rather than be misled by theory ; and a very intimate knowledge of his own countrymen. He was fully acquainted with their habits, their opinions, their virtues, their prejudices, and their weaknesses (for it is a mere affectation to say that any community is exempt from them) ; and he knew the stamina of their character to be firmness of purpose, hardihood, constancy in times of labour and peril, and attachment to genuine liberty, and a shrewd perception of their great interests—the whole being cemented and sanctioned by enlightened conscience and real principle.

In regard to worldly circumstances, Mr. Sherman was very happily situated. Beginning life without the aid of patrimonial wealth or powerful connexions ; with nothing

but his good sense and good principles ; he, by his industry and skilful management, always lived in a comfortable manner, and his property was gradually increasing. He was never grasping nor avaricious, but liberal in feeling, and, in proportion to his means, liberal in acts of beneficence and hospitality. His manner of living was in accordance with the strictest republican simplicity.

In private life, although he was habitually reserved and taciturn, yet in conversation relating to matters of importance, he was free and communicative. He was naturally modest ; and this disposition, increased, perhaps, by the deficiencies of his early education, often wore the appearance of bashfulness. In large companies, it is said, he appeared obviously embarrassed, and his speech was often slow and hesitating.

In his person, Mr. Sherman was considerably above the common stature : his form was erect and well proportioned, his complexion very fair, and his countenance manly and agreeable, indicating mildness, benignity, and decision. He did not neglect those smaller matters, without the observance of which a high station cannot be sustained with propriety and dignity. In his dress, he was plain, but remarkably neat ; and in his treatment of men of every class, he was universally affable and obliging. In the private relations of husband, father, and friend, he was uniformly kind, affectionate, faithful and constant.

“In short,” to use the language of the Rev. Dr. Edwards, “whether we consider him in public or private life ; whether we consider him as a politician, or a christian ; he was a great, and a good man. The words of David concerning Abner, may, with great truth, be applied on this occasion ; *know ye not, that there is a great man fallen this day in Israel.*”

SAMUEL HUNTINGTON.

Among the phalanx of patriots which fearlessly and unbroken resisted the menaces and efforts of the British government to prevent the declaration of independence, it is remarkable to observe the great proportion that arose from the humble walks of life, and by the vigour of their intellect, and unwearyed perseverance, compensated the deficiencies of early education, and enrolled themselves, with honour and capacity, among the champions of colonial freedom. When we look upon the plough-boy, or the mechanic, self-taught masters in the school of policy, elevated to the dignity of legislation, which, at that period, was conferred upon talents and integrity alone—when we see them seated among the first ranks of that great deliberative body which sealed with solemn pledges its devotion to independence—we are penetrated with deep emotions of admiration, not only at the powerful perseverance which rescued them from oblivion, but at the strength of mind and stability of purpose, which influenced and incited humble individuals to aspire to and attain a rank among the fathers and founders of the republic. But it is in times of public commotion, when the minds of men are powerfully agitated in the pursuit of favourite and important objects, that talents and genius attain their proper level. In seasons of public prosperity, when the vessel of the state pursues its course with favourable gales, and no adverse winds impede

its progress, little skill is necessary in the pilot or the crew ; but when clouds darken the political horizon, and the tempest approaches, the helm is willingly abandoned to the master-spirits who have the skill and resolution to breast the storm.

SAMUEL HUNTINGTON was the descendant of an ancient and respectable family, which emigrated at an early period into this country, and landed at Saybrook, in the province of Connecticut. His father, Nathaniel Huntington, was a plain, but worthy farmer, who followed his occupation in the town of Windham : his mother was distinguished for piety and native talent ; and their numerous children, of whom several devoted themselves to the gospel ministry, were endowed with an unusual portion of mental vigour and intelligence. The reverend Dr. Joseph Huntington, formerly minister of Coventry, a man of solid learning and exemplary piety, was one of the three sons who received a liberal education : he is well known as the author of a posthumous work, entitled, " Calvinism Improved, or the Gospel illustrated as a System of real Grace issuing in the salvation of all men : " he was graduated at Yale College in 1762, and died in the year 1795. Samuel, however, did not participate in the invaluable benefits which a collegiate education conferred upon his brothers : being the eldest son, he was destined by his parents to pursue a more humble, but certain course of life, by tilling the earth under the auspices of his father. This was, no doubt, at that time, considered an enviable situation : the immediate presence of paternal protection, and the acquisition of practical knowledge in an indispensable branch of political economy, was infinitely more inviting than a precarious dependence upon the probable advantages which might result from a liberal education. The pulpit or the bar was then considered, in general, as the ultimate destination of the student, whose

resources centered in himself, and whose only means of support were to be derived from his exertions in the acquisition of knowledge, and the improvement of his mental abilities. But these resources were equally uncertain : the ministry of the Gospel demanded moral as well as intellectual requisites, and when properly attained, the hopes and the means of the incumbent were closely contracted. The profession of the law required superior talents : to the eloquent and intelligent, it was the most certain path to wealth and distinction, but mediocrity of talents, or want of fluency, were insuperable obstacles to the attainment of either. The advocate, whose talents are not conspicuous, toils through life burthened with an arduous profession, without acquiring reputation for his exertions, or remuneration for his labour : from these considerations, the agricultural lot of Mr. Huntington was considered more fortunate than if he had been destined to embark in professional pursuits.

He was born in Windham, Connecticut, on the third day of July, 1732. His opportunities of acquiring knowledge were extremely limited, and he received no other education than the common schools of Connecticut at that period afforded. Gifted, however, with an excellent understanding, and a strong taste for mental improvement, he employed all his leisure hours in reading and study. The labours of the farm, which he continued to perform until the twenty-second year of his age, necessarily occupied the greater portion of his time ; yet, surmounting this obstacle, and without the assistance of a collegiate education, his strong and discerning mind enabled him to acquire a profitable stock of scientific information upon various subjects. At the age of twenty-two years, when he abandoned his agricultural pursuits to engage in the study of the law, he had acquired, principally from his own unassisted exertions, an excellent common edu-

cation. In the knowledge of the Latin language, his progress was considerable, but it does not appear that he directed his attention to any other foreign tongue.

A propensity for legal pursuits, which appears to have influenced his mind at an early period, was the stable foundation upon which his subsequent usefulness and celebrity were erected. The prospect of political fame could not, at that time, have incited his exertions, and it was the anticipation of a prosperous termination of his favourite pursuit alone, which induced him, at the advanced age of twenty-two years, to apply himself seriously to the study of the law. He resolved to enter the mighty maze, with no other guide than his own judgment and perseverance, and if fancy or eloquence should fail, to attain distinction by industry and self-denial. It is probable that the method adopted by him, arose from his pecuniary circumstances: he did not profit by any legal tuition in the office of a lawyer, but borrowed the necessary books from colonel Jedediah Elderkin, a respectable member of the profession, residing in Norwich. The difficulties arising from this mode of study were speedily surmounted by the persevering industry of Mr. Huntington, and having attained a competent knowledge of the general principles of law, he commenced his professional career in the town of Windham. In 1760, he removed to Norwich: at this period his reputation as a man of talents became more extensive, and his success and celebrity as a lawyer and an advocate, made a correspondent progress. Aided by a candid and deliberate manner, which appeared in some degree constitutional, few lawyers enjoyed a more extensive practice, or attracted more general applause. From his good sense, intelligence, and integrity, his preferment was remarkably rapid: in a few years his character as a man of business and punctuality was firmly established; his reputation as a lawyer was exalted, and his

extensive practice included all the important cases of his native county, as well as of those which bordered upon it.

In the thirtieth year of his age, the flattering prospect which presented itself to his view, induced him to unite the pleasures of domestic life with the triumphs of professional science. He married Martha, the daughter of the reverend Ebenezer Devotion, a gentleman of respectable talents and great usefulness in the town of Windham, of which he was the minister. This excellent lady possessed an amiable disposition, and condescending manners: the number was not few of those who had profited by her christian benefactions, and many of the poor could "rise up and call her blessed." The consequence of this conjugal relation, although no offspring cemented the union, was the enjoyment of pure domestic felicity, until the decease of Mrs. Huntington. Economical and exemplary in their habits, they, in some degree, avoided all society excepting that which courted their attention. Having no offspring, Mr. Huntington adopted two of the children of his brother, the reverend Joseph Huntington, to whom, having married sisters, he was doubly united. The late Samuel Huntington, governor of Ohio, and Mrs. Griffin, the wife of the reverend Dr. Griffin, president of William's College in Massachusetts, were the fortunate individuals who supplied the deficiency in his family, and profited by his excellent example and instructions. Mrs. Huntington died on the fourth of June, 1794, in the fifty-sixth year of her age.

In 1764, Mr. Huntington commenced his political labours as a representative of the town of Norwich in the general assembly; and in the following year, received the office of king's attorney, which he sustained with reputation until more important services induced him to relinquish it. In 1774, he was appointed an associate judge in the superior

court, and in the following year, a member of the council of Connecticut.

Being decided in his opposition to the claims and oppressions of the British parliament, and active in his exertions in favour of the colonies, the general assembly of Connecticut, properly appreciating his talents and patriotism, appointed him a delegate to congress, on the second Thursday of October, 1775, in conjunction with Roger Sherman, Oliver Wolcott, Titus Hosmer, and William Williams. On the sixteenth of January, 1776, he took his seat in that venerable assembly, and in the subsequent month of July, voted in favour of the declaration of independence. In this high station, he devoted his talents and time to the public service, during several successive years. His stern integrity, and inflexible patriotism, rendered him a prominent member, and attracted a large share of the current business of the house: as a member of numerous important committees, he acted with judgment and deliberation, and cheerfully and perseveringly dedicated his moments of leisure to the general benefit of the country. He zealously performed the duties of this office during the years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779. and 1780, when he returned to Connecticut, and resumed his station upon the bench, and seat in the council, which had been continued vacant until his return.

The estimation in which Mr. Huntington was held by his fellow members, may be properly appreciated from his appointment, on the twenty-eighth of September, 1779, to the highest civil dignity of the country. On the resignation of the honourable John Jay, who had been appointed minister plenipotentiary to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce, and of alliance, between the United States of America and his catholic majesty, Mr. Huntington was elected president of congress: in 1780, he was re-elected to the same honours.

ble office, which he continued to fill with dignity and impartiality until the following year, when, worn out by the constant cares of public life, and his unremitting application to his official duties, he desired leave of absence, and intimated to the house the necessity of his returning home for the re-establishment of his health. The nomination of his successor was, however, postponed by congress, which appeared unwilling to dispense with the services of a president, whose practical worth had been so long and amply displayed. After the expiration of two months, Mr. Huntington, on the sixth of July, 1781, more explicitly declared that his ill state of health would not permit him to continue longer in the exercise of the duties of that office, and renewed his application for leave of absence. His resignation was then accepted, and Samuel Johnson, of North Carolina, declining the appointment, Thomas M'Kean, of Pennsylvania, was elevated to the presidency. A few days after his retirement, the thanks of congress were presented to Mr. Huntington, "in testimony of their approbation of his conduct in the chair, and in the execution of public business."

After having thus pursued his congressional career with distinguished success, rising by the energy of his own mind and the perseverance of self instruction, from the plough to the presidency, Mr. Huntington, in August, 1781, resumed his judicial functions in the superior court of Connecticut, and his station in the council of that state. His rapid exaltation had not proved prejudicial to his mind or manners, but he returned to his constituents in the same plain and unassuming character, which had first attracted their confidence and admiration. The honours which had been conferred upon him might reasonably have excited some feelings of honest pride and self-gratulation, as they sprung from the instimulation of his own mind, and his

unassisted exertions and application in the pursuit of knowledge : the path which he had been compelled to pursue was rugged and intricate, until softened and disentangled by his own labour and resolution. Although, in his early youth, he possessed a studious and contemplative mind, he wanted that precocity of talents which so often disappoints our expectations. Premature ripeness of the understanding leads less frequently to distinction than a natural and deliberate development, improved and protected in its regular advance by the advantages of education, and free from that destructive consciousness of self-superiority which a precocious genius is too prone to display, and which, causing the possessor to despise the instruction of others, leaves him at the age of manhood far behind his less gifted, but more persevering and circumspect, competitors. But if a justifiable pride proved a source of self-satisfaction to Mr. Huntington, it was studiously concealed within the recesses of his own breast. He never evinced, either in his conduct or conversation, any exultation in regard to his political or professional prosperity, but uniformly maintained the mild and modest character for which he was distinguished at the commencement of his career.

On the second Thursday in May, 1782, he was again elected a delegate to congress, but it does not appear that he joined his colleagues in that body during the year for which he was then appointed. The injury which his health had previously sustained, and his duties as a judge, and a counsellor, probably prevented him from becoming an active member of the delegation. But his desire to engage in scenes of more general usefulness overcame these objections at the ensuing election : having been re-appointed on the second Thursday of May, 1783, he resumed his seat in congress on the following twenty-ninth of July, soon after the disorderly and menacing appearance of a number of armed mutineers

about the hall within which that body was assembled in Philadelphia, had induced them, for the preservation of the safety and dignity of the federal government, to remove to Princeton, in New Jersey. He continued, without intermission, to perform his duties in congress until its adjournment to Annapolis on the fourth of November, 1783, when he finally retired from the great council of the nation, of which he had so long been a conspicuous and influential member: the appointment of delegates to represent the state of Connecticut had taken place in the preceding month, at which time he declined a re-election. Oliver Wolcott, Oliver Ellsworth, and Richard Law, pursued the same course, and the delegation from Connecticut was wholly composed of new members, some of whom had previously represented the state in the darkest days of the revolution.

But the talents of Mr. Huntington were too valuable to be restricted to the duties of a private member of society, nor was he, probably, desirous of deserting the public theatre upon which he had acted so conspicuous a part, and gained such well merited reputation. In 1784, soon after his return from congress, he was appointed chief justice of the superior court of Connecticut, and after discharging the duties of that office for one year, was elected lieutenant governor of the state. Having at all times a perfect command over his passions, he presided on the bench with great ability and impartiality: no judge in Connecticut was more dignified in his deportment, more courteous and polite to the gentlemen of the bar, nor more respected by the particular parties interested in the proceedings of the court, as well as the public in general. His name and his virtues are frequently mentioned by those who remember him in his judicial capacity, with respect and veneration.

In 1786, he succeeded governor Griswold, as chief magistrate of the state, and continued to be annually re-elected, with singular unanimity, until his death. The prosperity of Connecticut during his administration, and the flourishing condition of its civil and military interests, are unequivocal testimonies of the wisdom and fidelity with which he presided.

This excellent man and undeviating patriot died in Norwich, on the fifth day of January, 1796, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. Although afflicted with a complication of disorders, particularly the dropsy in the chest, his death was tranquil and exemplary, and previous to the singular debility both of mind and body under which he laboured a few days before that event, his religious confidence continued firm and unwavering. In his person, Mr. Huntington was of the common stature; his complexion dark, and his eye bright and penetrating: his manners were somewhat formal, and he possessed a peculiar faculty of repressing impertinence, repelling unpleasant advances, and keeping aloof from the criticising observations of the multitude. But in the social circle of relatives and friends, he was a pleasing and entertaining companion. Without inflicting upon others the consciousness of inferiority, he never descended from the dignity of his station.

Few men, possessing all the facilities of education, have attained a greater share of civil honours than the self-taught Huntington. Deserting the cultivation of the soil, in which he was not a speculative, but a practical, labourer, he plunged guideless, but courageously, into the long labyrinth of the law. Threading its many mazes with circumspect and steady steps, he emerged triumphantly from its dark and devious course, into the plain and brilliant road which conducted him to honour and renown. Pursuing his legal career, his progress was only arrested by the attainment of the first judicial

station in the state, and his political qualifications elevated him to the highest civil dignity which it was in the power of the people of the United States to confer, as the president of congress, and of the particular citizens of Connecticut, as their chief counsellor and magistrate. A firm republican in principle and practice, he never deviated nor hesitated in the course which it was his duty to pursue ; having formed those principles after mature reflection, he persevered in a regular opposition to the arbitrary proceedings of the British government : but while he strenuously advocated a firm and deliberate resistance, and encouraged the incitement of popular feelings when restricted within proper bounds, he uniformly opposed and discountenanced all tumultuous meetings of the people ; and the excesses that were committed at different periods by lawless and impetuous mobs, met with his decided disapprobation. He was distinguished less as an orator than a judge, and his distinguished characteristics, both in conversation and in epistolary correspondence, were brevity and caution.

His deportment in domestic life was excellent ; his temper serene ; and his disposition benevolent. The whole tenor of his conversation was ingratiating and exemplary ; and although sometimes absorbed in deep meditation, he was generally friendly, cheerful, and social. Being a man of great simplicity and plainness of manners, he was averse to all pageantry and parade, and strictly economical in his expenditures : he maintained that it was a public duty to exhibit such an example as might, so far as his individual efforts could avail, counteract the spirit of extravagance which had begun to appear. His principal aim in his domestic arrangements was comfort and convenience without splendour ; although not hostile to good living, he was simple, sparing, and temperate, in his own diet. This rigorous economy attracted the

charge of parsimony, upon which it closely bordered ; but it was probably advanced by individuals, who believed that extravagance was the mark of a generous, and economy of an avaricious disposition : to those who have been educated in habits of care and foresight, economy insures independence, and frequently enables the charitable, who do not possess great riches, to indulge in extensive acts of benevolence. Thus the private beneficence of Mr. Huntington could have been amply attested, particularly by those relatives whose situation required his assistance.

Mr. Huntington was a man of profound thought and penetration, of great prudence and practical wisdom, of patient investigation and singular perseverance, of distinguished moderation and equanimity : he was cool and deliberate, moderate and circumspect in all his actions, and possessed of a clear and sound mind. His conversation, studiously avoiding frivolous topics, was eminently instructive, and he delivered his sentiments in few, but weighty, words. He inherited from nature a large share of that delicacy and sense of propriety which distinguish the man of honour and refinement. Being truly an upright man, one of the leading traits of his character was the love of justice ; this principle was so deeply and indelibly impressed upon his heart, that in whatever circle of society he moved, and in whatever situation of life he was placed, he was steadfastly and strenuously its advocate and promoter. Notwithstanding his elevation, his mind was unsullied by that false pride which dignity and honours are so apt to create : after performing the business of his office, and instructing numerous students in the principles of the law, he was accustomed, if any garden or household utensils had been broken, to repair them with his own hands ; and, rather than require the attendance of a servant for any trivial services, he would perform them himself. It may truly be said that no man ever

possessed greater mildness or equanimity than Mr. Huntington; a living witness can attest, that during a long residence of twenty-four years in his family, he never, in a single instance, exhibited the slightest symptoms of anger, nor spoke one word calculated to wound the feelings of another, or to injure an absent person. He was the friend of order and of religion, a member of the christian church, and punctual in the devotions of the family.

But the eulogy of words can never exalt the memory which is not previously embalmed in the progress of an exemplary life. For many years a professor of religion, Mr. Huntington appeared to enjoy great satisfaction both in the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel; a constant attendant upon public worship, "he was occasionally the people's mouth to God, when destitute of preaching." As a professor of christianity, and supporter of its institutions, he was exemplary and devout: he manifested an unshaken faith in its doctrines, amid the distresses of declining life, until debility of mind and body, produced by his last illness, rendered him incapable of social intercourse.

was skilfully conducted by colonel Whiting, the second in command, who succeeded in joining the forces under sir William Johnson: notwithstanding the superiority of the French force, and the loss which the regiment had sustained in the engagement, the French were finally repulsed, and the baron wounded and taken prisoner.

After the death of colonel Williams, and at the close of the campaign, Mr. Williams returned to Lebanon: this measure was probably occasioned by the loss of his patron and relative. He was, at this period, twenty-four years of age, and resolved to establish his residence in his native town. He returned dissatisfied and disgusted with the British commanders: their haughtiness and arbitrary conduct, and their inattention to the interests of America, made a powerful and lasting impression upon his mind. Even at that early period, he formed the opinion that the prosperity of his native country would never be secured under the administration of officers who had no common interests nor feelings with the people; and that to enable them to profit by the means within their reach, a government dependent on themselves was necessary.

The youth as well as the maturer age of Mr. Williams were characterized by his fondness for mechanical pursuits; in architecture, he was particularly interested: nor was he inattentive to the study of mathematics, and the learned languages, and, at an advanced period of life, he was still a proficient in the Greek and Latin languages.

At the age of twenty-five years, he commenced his political career as town clerk, to which situation he was annually elected during the long period of forty-five years. He was chosen, about the same time, to represent the town in the general assembly of Connecticut, although it was, at that period, unusual to select so young a man to fill that responsible station. He was soon after appointed a justice of the peace. It may

almost be said that he was invariably, during the course of his long and useful life, a member of one of the branches of the legislature. During his services in that body, he was chosen clerk, and for many years speaker, of the house of representatives. In the year 1780, he was elected an assistant or counsellor, and was annually re-elected for twenty-four years until he resigned the office in 1804, at which period he yielded up all his public employments, excepting that of judge probate, and retired to private life. His attention to the public service was so close and unvaried, that he was seldom absent from his seat in the legislature for more than *ninety sessions*, except when he was chosen a delegate to congress in 1776 and 1777. During the greater part of the war he was a member of the council of safety, whose sessions were daily and unremitting. He was a judge of the county court for Windham county, and judge of probate for Windham district, during the term of forty years. He held many other offices of minor consequence, both civil and military. In fact, he spent his whole life in the service of the public, and in promoting the prosperity of his country. In 1773, Mr. Williams was appointed colonel of the twelfth regiment of militia, then very efficient, and comprising seventeen hundred men; but he resigned his commission in 1776, upon his election as a delegate to congress. Not being deficient in personal courage, the resignation of his military office at a period when it was probable that he might speedily be called into active service, excited some surprise; but he silenced these suggestions by observing that his lieutenant colonel, Henry Champion, was an older man than himself, and fully capable of commanding the regiment; that his duty and inclination led him to use his exertions in the deliberations of congress; and that, under such circumstances, he ought not to retain the office from one whom he considered a better military officer than himself.

After he took his seat in the general congress, he never acted in a military capacity except as a volunteer at New London, when that town was destroyed by the traitor Arnold. On that occasion, he rode to New London, a distance of twenty-three miles, in three hours : but the enemy was preparing to embark when he arrived.

At a general assembly of the governor and company of the state of Connecticut, held at New Haven on the second Thursday of October, 1775, Mr. Williams was appointed a delegate to represent the state in the general congress, and on the second Thursday of October, 1776, he was re-elected to that high and honourable office. He was therefore present and assisted in the deliberations of that august assembly, when the great charter of our independence was submitted to its consideration.

Soon after the battle of Germantown, Mr. Williams was instrumental in preventing the capture of one of his colleagues, (colonel Dyer, of Windham,) and narrowly escaped himself from falling into the hands of the enemy. On the approach of the British towards Philadelphia, he retired with the congress to Yorktown, where he remained during the winter.

The acknowledged aim of Mr. Williams, in his political career, was to merit the title of an *honest* politician, and no one was more successful in obtaining it : he never desired any office in which he could not promote the public good. He was scrupulously honest in all the transactions of private life ; and obtained, as a merchant, the unlimited confidence of his fellow-citizens. When the troubles of the revolution commenced, he embarked enthusiastically in the cause of the colonies. He settled and relinquished his mercantile concerns, and devoted himself wholly to the service of his country. His exertions were indefatigable in arousing the feelings of his fellow-citizens ; both by nervous essays in the public

papers, and by public speaking : he was an elegant and sententious writer ; a vehement and ardent orator. His voice was strong and powerful, and his eloquence gathered fresh force as he became animated by the increasing interest of his subject. His political career was untainted by selfishness, unless, indeed, it was selfish to seek elevation in the public opinion, by pure and disinterested patriotism. He was never wealthy, but he abandoned a lucrative business, and sacrificed the greater part of his estate in the public service : the property, which a life of plodding industry, divested of every care or feeling in the contest, excepting such as might relate to the great goal of gain, might have swelled into an ample fortune, was, at the death of the patriot, dwindled down to less than five thousand dollars.

It is related, as an evidence of his sincerity, that in the early stages of the revolution, he had more than two thousand dollars in specie, being a portion of the proceeds of his merchandize : continental currency would not, at that period, procure the services which were required, and Mr. Williams, from patriotic motives, exchanged the specie in his possession for continental money : he lost the whole, but it was a loss which he never regretted. This anecdote affords an example of that practical patriotism which tests the sincerity of the heart.

The disinterestedness of his conduct was also apparent in the settlement of his affairs, previous to his thorough embarkation in the turbulent scenes of the revolution. His mind was so fully bent upon the one great object, that he scarcely took the trouble of collecting the notes which he had received : he was accustomed to remark, that many of his debtors had been impoverished by the war, some had died, and others had been killed in the public service, and that he would never enforce payment from the widow and the fatherless—more

especially from those whose husbands and fathers had perished in the cause of their country.

He was a prudent and economical, but liberal, man. As judge of probate, he always declined receiving the customary fees from indigent widows, on whom he conferred the benefits of his friendly advice, which, from the extent of his influence, frequently proved of essential service. During the period in which he held the office of judge of probate, being about forty years, his decisions were never, in a single instance, reversed by the supreme court. In his judicial capacity, he was stern and inflexible towards the hardened offender ; but mild and benevolent, so far as his duty would permit, to those who were seduced by error, or evil counsels. In many cases, he devoted the perquisites of his office to charitable purposes ; and always evinced that inattention to private emolument, which so strongly characterized the course of his political career.

The state of Connecticut has, from the earliest times, been particularly assiduous in the promotion of public instruction. A charitable fund had been granted for the support of schools, arising out of the sales of lands in Litchfield county, which was divided among the old settled towns, previous to the revolutionary war. In the confusion of the contest, this fund was lost by the greater part of the towns in the state: the authorities of Lebanon, however, placing implicit confidence in the integrity of Mr. Williams, requested him to take charge of their school-fund. Amid the varied multiplicity of his affairs, he guarded it with solicitude, and after the termination of the war, he resigned his trust, including both principal and interest, which has now become a productive fund for the support of schools.

The duties of a select-man, which Mr. Williams performed during the whole war, were then of considerable importance.

The select-men throughout New England manage the fiscal affairs of the towns ; they are the guardians of the poor, and during the war, the families of indigent soldiers were maintained by the towns. Mr. Williams was accustomed to remark, that at the commencement of the contest, there was absolutely nothing to support it but the patriotism of the people ; no stores, no money, no warlike instruments, no clothing, nothing to arm or to comfort the soldier. The select-men of the towns in Connecticut, in the beginning of the war, collected almost every thing necessary to clothe and equip the recruits, from private families. Mr. Williams, as one of the select-men of Lebanon, which then contained about four thousand inhabitants, visited almost every private family for the purpose of procuring lead, clothing, &c. but especially blankets, for the use of the army. He collected and forwarded more than one thousand blankets, with many other useful articles, including a large quantity of lead, at that time so indispensable, which was in many instances procured by cutting off the weights from the clocks: the inhabitants, and especially the ladies, freely parted with their last blanket for the public service. Such were the unremitting exertions of Mr. Williams, in almost every grade of office ; whether we regard him as a judge upon the bench, or a member of the committee of safety ; a counsellor in congress, or a select-man of Lebanon, he always appears in the same unvarnished character—a pure, disinterested, and persevering patriot. After our present form of government was fully established, he often observed, that no person could possibly conceive the troubles that were encountered in obtaining our independence, but those who achieved it. His house was always open to the soldiers marching to, or returning from, the army: in the year 1781, he wholly resigned his dwelling for the accommodation of the officers of Laurens' legion, who

were stationed, during the winter, in Lebanon. His zeal and anxiety for the public good was truly without guile; his motives were as pure as the cause which he supported, and his name and character stand recorded upon the page of history, as a proud and triumphant refutation of the surly dogma of Dr. Johnson, that patriotism is "the last refuge of a scoundrel."

Mr. Williams, when his health permitted, rarely retired to rest before one o'clock at night, in the whole course of the war. During the day he was so fully occupied, that it was necessary, in conformity with his uniform rule, to arrange the business and accounts of the preceding day, by trespassing upon those hours which are usually devoted to rest: although his constitution was remarkably firm, his health became essentially impaired by this close and unremitting application.

The following characteristic anecdote fully displays his disposition and zeal in relation to the cause which he so warmly maintained. At the close of the year 1776, and a short time previous to the battle of Trenton, the people of the states began to be greatly alarmed at the disastrous situation of the national affairs. At this period the council of safety was sitting in Lebanon, and two of the members, William Hillhouse, and Benjamin Huntington, generally resided in the family of Mr. Williams. Mr. Hillhouse was a calm, firm, and sedate man, of superior judgment and knowledge; Mr. Huntington was a judge of the superior court, and a shrewd lawyer. The conversation naturally reverted to the darkness of the times, and the dangers which were then apprehended from the eventual success of the British arms: they at length considered their probable respective fates, should the fears of the nation be realized. Mr. Williams remarked, that he would in all probability be hung, as

he had used every exertion to commence and prosecute the contest; that he had published a great number of hostile essays in the public papers of the day; and that he had signed the Declaration of Independence, which was an act of rebellion that the British government would never pardon. Mr. Hillhouse said that he did not despair of ultimate success, but that whatever should happen, he would endeavour to act in a proper manner, and to the best advantage. Mr. Huntington observed, that as he neither signed the Declaration of Independence, nor had written any thing in opposition to the British government, he was, at all events, secure from the gallows. Mr. Williams instantly replied with great warmth, addressing himself to Mr. Huntington, "then, sir, you ought to be hanged for not doing your duty."

Mr. Williams was a member of the state convention of Connecticut, which adopted the existing constitution, and exerted his influence in its support. Although the people of Lebanon were opposed to it, they elected him as their representative, and he strongly advocated its adoption by the state, in opposition to the opinions of his constituents. Being fully impressed with the necessity of the measure, he acted, as he had ever done, independently, and it was not long before the inhabitants of Lebanon expressed their gratitude for his conduct upon that occasion, and coalesced in the opinion which he had expressed.

In the year 1772, he married Mary Trumbull, the second daughter of Jonathan Trumbull, at that time governor of the state; he was, without doubt, the most eminent man in Connecticut, and the distinguished services which he rendered to his country will be long gratefully remembered. Mrs. Williams, a lady in every respect worthy of her descent and her connexion, is still living, in the seventy-eighth year of her age. Their family consisted of three children. Solomon,

the eldest, died in October, 1810, in New York, where he had established himself in business with favourable prospects; he was thirty-eight years of age at the time of his decease, and a man beloved and regretted by all who knew him. Faith, the only daughter of Mr. Williams, entered into marriage with John McClellan, and now lives at Woodstock, in Connecticut. William Trumbull Williams, the surviving son, a gentleman of conspicuous attainments, resides in Lebanon.

In the domestic circle, Mr. Williams was tender and affectionate, anxious for the welfare of his children, and particularly solicitous in procuring them the benefits of education: his sons were both educated at Yale college. His public engagements, and frequent absence from home, deprived him of many of the enjoyments of domestic life; but it served to impart fresh warmth to the pleasure with which he joined the family circle, and merged for a season the cares of the patriot, in the blessings and comforts of home. His domestic government was regular and uniform; his domestics participated in his paternal kindness; and this constant and endearing system resulted in the strictest bonds of union and love.

The death of his eldest son produced a powerful effect upon the mind of Mr. Williams, now far advanced in life, and he never recovered from the shock which it occasioned. From that moment his health gradually declined: when upon the bed of death, not having spoken for the space of four days, he called in a clear voice upon the name of his deceased son, and required him to attend his dying parent; and almost instantly expired. He died on the second day of August, 1811, in the eighty-first year of his age. Old age, and grief for the premature death of his son, were the causes of his death; possessed of an excellent constitution, his faculties remained uninjured until a few years before his decease, when

his hearing became somewhat impaired. His person was of the middle stature and remarkably erect and well proportioned : in his youth, his features were handsome ; his hair and eyes were black ; his nose, aquiline ; his face, round ; and his complexion, fair.

His temper was naturally ardent, but his exertions to attain the command over it were, in some degree, crowned with success. He possessed, however, during his whole life, a redundancy of spirit and vehemence of expression, which frequently created in himself strong and sorrowful feelings. On ordinary occasions he was taciturn and reserved ; he was involved habitually in deep thinking, and when he had formed his decision, was tenacious of his opinion. He was, by many, considered proud ; an unjust opinion, which arose, probably, from his natural reserve. He did not, however, undervalue his public services, although he was too independent to solicit a vote, and too honest to vote upon any popular occasion, in opposition to the convictions of his own conscience, or to his own proper ideas of the public welfare. In fact his disinterested, honest, and upright conduct, rendered him a model for all politicians : without popular manners, he was semi-annually elected to public office for more than fifty years, thus reviving the observation of the poet, "that corruption wins not more than honesty."

Mr. Williams was a man of piety : he entertained the religious opinions of the congregationalists, of which communion he became a member in his youth, and through the course of a long life he never varied from his professions. In all the various situations in which he was placed, and the connexions which he was compelled to form with all classes of people, he preserved, unblemished, his christian character, conduct, and conversation. The high opinion which his brethren of the church entertained relative to his piety and



virtue, may be inferred from his election, when a young man, to the office of deacon, which he retained until his death. He honoured the sacred ordinances, and was a strict attendant at church ; his liberality towards clergymen, and all religious, charitable, and missionary societies, was very conspicuous. Although rigid in his religious opinions, he was free from bigotry, and loving, as he did, all real christians, conscientiously maintained that every man ought to worship the Creator after his own heart. At the close of his life, being deprived in a great measure of the enjoyments and benefits of social intercourse by his deafness, he spent a great portion of his time in reading, meditation, and prayer. "At length the time that infinite wisdom had fixed being come, and the stores of nature being exhausted, he gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years ; and he was gathered to his people."

By this constitution it was ordained that two general assemblies or courts should annually be held in April and September respectively. At the first, called the court of election, all the public officers were annually elected, among whom were six magistrates besides the governor, empowered to administer justice according to the established laws, and in cases where no express law existed, to be governed by the word of God. These officers were chosen by the whole body of the freemen convened in general election; the governor by the greatest number of votes, and the magistrates by a majority. No person could fill the station of governor who was not a member of an approved church, and had previously been a magistrate in the colony; nor could any individual be elected to the office more than once in two years.

It was also ordained that the several towns should send their deputies to the court of election, and at the termination of the election, they should proceed to transact any public business, as at other courts. The court of September was assembled for the purpose of enacting salutary laws, and performing any other duties connected with the public service. Having established the mode of convoking the general courts, the constitution decreed that the towns of Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield should respectively send four freemen as their deputies to every general court, and that any other towns which might hereafter become incorporated with the colony, should depute such a number, as the court, in proportion to their free population, should determine. These deputies were vested with the whole power of the respective towns which they represented.

The constitution also provided that, in case the governor, or the majority of the magistrates should refuse or neglect, upon any urgent occasion, to call a general assembly, the freemen should, as a preparatory step to the legal exercise

of their rights, petition them to summon it; and if the petition of a major part of the freemen produced no effect, then the constables of the several towns should, when requested by the petitioners, convoke an assembly. It was then provided, that this assembly should have the right of choosing a moderator, and of exercising all the powers of any other general assembly. All those regularly summoned by the governor were to consist of himself, four magistrates, and the major part of the deputies, and when there was an equal vote, the governor had a casting voice. It was also determined that no general court could be dissolved or adjourned without the consent of a major part of the members; and that, whenever a tax was imposed, the quota to be levied on each town should be established by a committee consisting of an equal number of delegates from the respective towns.

These courts, whether convened by the governor, or a majority of the freemen, held the supreme power of the commonwealth, and they alone possessed authority to make or repeal laws, to grant levies, to admit freemen, and to dispose of lands undisposed of, &c.

Such, in substance, was the original constitution of Connecticut: "the formation of it," says the historian of that state, "at so early a period, when the light of liberty was wholly darkened in most parts of the earth, and the rights of men were so little understood in others, does great honour to the ability, integrity, and love of mankind," evinced by our venerable ancestors.

Henry Wolcott was elected a deputy to the first general assembly in April, 1639, and continued a member of the assembly, or one of the magistracy, till his death in 1655, in the seventy-eighth year of his age.

It is a memorable circumstance of a family so eminently distinguished in the annals of Connecticut, that after the de-

cease of Henry Wolcott, some one of his descendants was annually chosen into the magistracy for a term of nearly eighty years, until the year 1754, when governor Roger Wolcott left the executive chair; and that some of the family have been members of the assembly, judges of the superior court, or magistrates, from the first settlement of the colony to this time, comprising a term of nearly two centuries.

Henry, the eldest son of Henry Wolcott, succeeded to the principal part of his estate, and was annually chosen a magistrate. He was named as one of the patentees in the charter granted to Connecticut, by Charles II. on the twentieth of April, 1662. He died in 1680.

Simon Wolcott was the youngest son of the first Henry Wolcott. He was a farmer in Windsor; was born in England in 1625; emigrated to this country with his father's family; married to Martha Pitkin in 1661; and died at Windsor in 1687, leaving a numerous issue.

The youngest son of Simon was Roger Wolcott, who is distinguished in the annals of Connecticut. He was born at Windsor, January 4th, 1679. The impoverished state of the country, occasioned by Indian wars, and the labours and expenses incident to new settlements, deprived him of the advantages of an early education. He was bound as an apprentice to a mechanic, at the age of twelve years. At twenty-two, he established himself at East Windsor, where by industry and frugality, he acquired a competent estate. By regular degrees, he rose to the highest military and civil honour. He was commissary of the Connecticut forces in the expedition against Canada, in 1711.

In 1745, an expedition against Cape Breton was resolved upon by the general court of Massachusetts, and despatches were immediately sent to the neighbouring colonies, urging them to assist in the enterprise. On the twenty-sixth Febr-

ary, governor Law, of Connecticut, in consequence of these communications, convened a special assembly at Hartford, which promptly authorised the levy of eight companies; and Roger Wolcott, at that time lieutenant governor, was appointed commander in chief. When the troops of Connecticut formed a junction with those of the other colonies, colonel Peperell, a gentleman of great landed interest, and largely engaged in commerce, was appointed, as has been noticed in a previous memoir, commander in chief of the combined forces. Governor Wolcott was second in command, with the rank of major general, and assisted in the capture of Louisburgh, June 17th, 1745. The popularity of these commanders, and the sacrifices which they made of ease and interest, gave them great influence over the inferior officers and privates.

When it was deemed expedient by the legislature, notwithstanding the long and expensive controversy of Connecticut with Rhode Island, relative to the Narraganset country, to resign the claim to those lands, Roger Wolcott was a member of the committee on the part of Connecticut, which, in conjunction with the Rhode Island deputies, finally ascertained and properly distinguished the boundary line between the respective colonies, in 1728.

He was successively a member of the assembly and of the council, a judge of the county court, deputy governor, chief judge of the superior court, and from 1751 to 1754, governor. He died May 17th, 1767, in the eighty-ninth year of his age. He was free and affable, easy of access, of ready wit and great humour, a sincere christian, and a zealous advocate for the civil and religious privileges of his country, which he defended with a firm spirit. Although uneducated in early life, his literary attainments were respectable. He published several tracts, and a long poem, containing an account of the agency

of John Winthrop in procuring from Charles II. the charter of Connecticut, and describing, in the language of that day, the principal events of the Pequot war, as conducted by John Mason.

OLIVER WOLCOTT, the events of whose life are more particularly the subject of this present memoir, was the youngest son of Roger Wolcott, and was born the twenty-sixth of November, 1726. He was graduated at Yale college in 1747. In the same year, he received a commission as captain in the army, from governor Clinton of New York, and immediately raised a company, at the head of which he marched to the defence of the northern frontiers, where he served until the regiment to which he was attached, was disbanded, in consequence of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. He then returned to Connecticut, and applied himself to the study of medicine, under the direction of his brother, Dr. Alexander Wolcott, then a distinguished practitioner. Before he was established in practice, the county of Litchfield was organized, and he was appointed the first sheriff of the county, in 1751. In the year 1774, he was promoted to the station of an assistant or counsellor, to which he was annually elected till the year 1786. While a member of the council, he was also chief judge of the court of common pleas for the county, and for many years judge of the court of probate for the district of Litchfield. He served in the militia in every grade of office, from that of captain to that of major-general. On all the questions preliminary to the revolutionary war, he was a firm advocate of the American cause. In July, 1775, he was appointed by congress one of the commissioners of Indian affairs for the northern department. This was a trust of great importance.* Its object was to induce the Indian nations to remain neutral during the war. While he was engaged in

this business, the controversies respecting boundaries between Connecticut and Pennsylvania, and between Vermont and New York, menaced the tranquillity of the colonies, and exposed them to the seductions of British partizans. Mr. Wolcott's influence was exerted, with great effect, to compromise these disputes, and to unite the New England settlers in support of the American cause.

In January, 1776, he attended congress at Philadelphia, and remained with that body till the Declaration of Independence was adopted and signed. He then returned to Connecticut, and on the fifteenth of August was appointed, by governor Trumbull and the council of safety, to command fourteen regiments of the Connecticut militia, which were ordered for the defence of New York. This duty he performed till the force, amounting to more than five thousand men, was subdivided into four brigades. He then returned home for a few weeks. In November, 1776, he resumed his seat in congress, and accompanied that body to Baltimore during the eventful winter of 1777. The ensuing summer, he was constantly employed in superintending detachments of militia, and corresponding on military subjects. After detaching several thousand men to the assistance of general Putnam on the North river, he headed a corps of between three and four hundred volunteers, who joined the northern army under general Gates, where he acquired a command of between one and two thousand militia, who aided in reducing the British army under general Burgoyne. In February, 1778, he attended congress at York Town, and continued with that body till July. In the summer of 1779, after the invasion of Connecticut by the British, he was in the field at the head of a division of the militia, for the defence of the sea coast. In 1780 he remained in Connecticut. From 1781 to 1783, he occasionally attended congress. In 1784 and

1785, he was one of the commissioners of Indian affairs for the Northern department, and, in concert with Richard Butler and Arthur Lee, prescribed the terms of peace to the Six Nations of Indians. From 1786, he was annually elected lieutenant governor till 1796, when he was chosen governor; which office he held till his death, on the first of December, 1797, in the seventy-second year of his age.

This brief recital of the services of Oliver Wolcott proves that during an active and laborious life, devoted to the public service, he constantly enjoyed the confidence of his fellow citizens—a confidence alike honourable to him, and to the people of the state. He married Laura Collins, of Guilford, in the year 1755, with whom he lived till her death in 1795. In the arduous duties in which he was engaged during the revolutionary war, he was well supported by his wife, who during his almost constant absence from home, educated their children and conducted the domestic concerns of the family, including the management of a small farm, with a degree of fortitude, perseverance, frugality and intelligence, equal to that which, in the best days of ancient Rome, distinguished their most illustrious matrons. Had it not been for her aid, his public services could not have been rendered, without involving a total sacrifice of the interests of his family; with her aid, his house was a seat of comfort and hospitality; and by means of her assistance, he retained during life a small estate, a part of which was a patrimonial inheritance.

The person of Mr. Wolcott was tall and erect, indicating great personal strength and dignity. His countenance manifested a sedate and resolute mind. His manners were urbane, and through life he was distinguished for modesty. Though firm and tenacious of his own opinions, which he distinctly expressed on all suitable occasions, he ever manifested great deference for the opinions of others. The state of Connecticut

was, upon principle, well united in support of the revolution, and during the war, was second only to Massachusetts in the effective force furnished for its defence. There were here no British governors, officers, judges, nor agents. Although a few respectable men were of opinion that the war was premature and indiscreet, yet as their opinions proceeded from their peculiar views of the public interests and policy, their opposition was in general limited by moderation. The consequence was that the war of the revolution produced in this state few or none of those distressing effects which usually attend civil conflicts. The subject of these remarks was therefore able to maintain with his political opponents, and to extort from the enemy, the character of an inflexible republican, with the precious commendation of being just and humane in all his conduct. He was indeed a republican of the old school, and his ideas of government and social liberty were derived from the purest sources. He was never idle; dissipation had no charms for him. Though not a learned man by profession, the writings of the most celebrated historians, biographers, poets, and orators, both ancient and modern, were familiar to his mind, and afforded him the only relaxation in which he indulged from active exertions. He was intimately acquainted with public law, and with the works of the great luminaries of science, who flourished in Europe, subsequent to the reformation. His integrity was inflexible, his morals were strictly pure, and his faith that of an humble christian, untainted by bigotry or intolerance.

Mr. Wolcott was personally acquainted with, and esteemed by, most of the great actors of the American revolution, and his name is recorded in connexion with many of its most important events. It is the glory of our country, that the fabric of American greatness was reared by the united toils and exertions of patriots in every state, supported by a virtuous

and intelligent people. It is peculiar to our revolution, and distinguishes it from every other, that it was recommended, commenced, conducted, and terminated under the auspices of men, who, with few exceptions, enjoyed the public confidence during every vicissitude of fortune. It is therefore sufficient for any individual to say of him, that he was distinguished for his virtues, his talents, and his services during the age of men—

“Of men, on whom late time a kindling eye
Shall turn, and tyrants tremble while they read.”

That Mr. Wolcott was justly entitled to this distinction was never disputed by his contemporaries.

which opened the path to the accomplishment of this glorious achievement. It is by these means that we are enabled to divest this great political revolution of its dependence upon fortuitous circumstances, and by tracing its source to principles which never change, and causes which always exist, to render it a proud trophy to the triumph of reason.

The wisdom, the patriotism, and the devotion to the common cause, which characterized the American congress, have already excited the applause of the historian, and the admiration of mankind. It is only, however, by considering them individually, in their private relations and circumstances, that these qualities can be appreciated to their full extent. The subject of the following notice was a member of that body during the greater part of the revolutionary war, and participated deeply with those with whom he was associated, in an ardent and resolute attachment to the liberty of his country.

On the fourth of July, 1776, the state of New York was represented in congress by William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris, and Henry Misner; all these delegates voted in favour of the Declaration of Independence, and when it was afterwards engrossed and signed, they all, with the exception of the last, affixed their names to it. Mr. MISNER left congress in the interval, and although an ardent friend and advocate of the act, has been, by this circumstance, deprived of the honour which might have resulted from the public record of his sentiments.

The first delegate, therefore, of New York, whose name appears on the Declaration, was WILLIAM FLOYD. This gentleman was the son of an opulent and respectable landholder in the county of Suffolk, upon Long Island, who left him, at an early age, the principal inheritor of his estate.

His grandfather, Richard Floyd, emigrated from Wales about the year 1680, and settled at Setauket upon Long Island, where he engaged in agriculture, and soon acquired considerable distinction from his wealth and public spirit. His second son Nicoll was a man of domestic habits, who confined himself chiefly to the occupations of private life, and died at an early age, with the reputation of a respectable farmer. His eldest son, the subject of this memoir, was born on the seventeenth of December, 1734. His education, although liberal for the times, was chiefly confined to the useful branches of knowledge, and was hardly completed, when he was called, by the death of his father, to assume the management of his patrimonial estate. His early life was principally spent in the circle of an extensive family connexion, which comprised the most respectable families in the county. The country in which he lived, at that time abounded with game of every variety, and having little to occupy his attention, much of his time was devoted to hunting, an amusement to which he was passionately addicted. His hospitality corresponded with his means of indulging in it, and his house became the perpetual resort of an extensive acquaintance, and the frequent scene of social festivity.

As a leading member of the society in which he lived, he was often called, in his turn, to the discharge of local offices incident to municipal regulations, in which his conduct was marked with attention and fidelity. Other offices of greater consequence, and more extensive in their relations, were also sustained by him, in a manner which met the approbation of his fellow citizens, and procured for him the acquaintance and friendship of the most respectable men in the then province.

He embarked, at an early period, in the controversy between Great Britain and the colonies, and as it grew more animated,

became conspicuous for the zeal and ardour with which he espoused the popular cause. There was in his conduct, both in public and private life, a characteristic sincerity which never failed to inspire confidence; and which, combined with the warmth and spirit with which he opposed the usurpations of the British government, had acquired for him an extensive popularity. It was doubtless, from these considerations, that he was appointed one of the delegates from New York to the first continental congress, which met in Philadelphia on the fifth of September, 1774. In that patriotic and venerable assembly, he was associated with men whose names are identified with their country's birth, and will long be cherished in grateful remembrance. Their proceedings had a powerful effect in arousing the attention of the colonists, and in directing it to the true points on which the controversy with the parent country rested; they were also admirably calculated, by their moderation and firmness, to conciliate the minds of moderate and reflecting men. It may, perhaps, be observed with truth, that with all the light which experience affords, the most consummate wisdom could hardly devise a system of measures better adapted to the situation of the colonies at that time, than those which are recorded upon the journals of the first continental congress.

Previous to his attendance in congress, Mr. Floyd had been appointed to the command of the militia of the county of Suffolk, and upon his return, he found Long Island menaced with an invasion from a naval force assembled in Gardiner's bay, with the avowed object of gathering supplies. When the landing of the enemy was reported to him, he promptly assembled the force under his command, and marched to the point of attack. It was, perhaps, fortunate for his little army, composed of raw and undisciplined militia, that the terror of their approach left nothing for their arms

to accomplish. The activity displayed, however, had an important effect in inducing the enemy to abandon their design.

In April, 1775, having been again chosen, by the provincial assembly of New York, a delegate to the general congress of the colonies, he took his seat in the second continental congress, which met in Philadelphia on the tenth of May following, and continued a constant attendant for more than two years. As a member of this congress, general Floyd united with his illustrious associates in boldly dissolving the political bonds which connected the colonies to the British crown, and co-operated in the arduous and responsible task of arraying them in hostility to the British empire. Under circumstances of danger and distress, with difficulties almost insurmountable, and embarrassments the most complicated, they were raised from the posture of supplication, and clothed in the armour of war.

During this interesting and protracted session, general Floyd was constantly and actively employed in the discharge of his public duties, to which he bestowed the most unremitting attention. He was chosen on numerous and important committees, the details of which were complicated, difficult, and, in many cases, extremely laborious. In procuring supplies for the army, in forwarding the expedition ordered against Canada, and particularly in introducing an efficient organization of the militia, (which may be said to have been the mother of the regular army,) as well as in many other matters to which his attention was particularly directed by congress, he was enabled, by his experience and habits of business, to render essential service.

During his attendance in congress, Long Island was evacuated by the American troops, and occupied by those of Great Britain. His family, in consequence of this event,

were driven from their home in great haste and confusion, and were removed by his friends into Connecticut. The produce and stock of his estate were seized by the enemy, and the mansion-house selected as a rendezvous for a party of horse, by whom it was occupied during the remainder of the war. This event was the source of serious inconvenience to him, as it precluded him from deriving any benefit from his landed property, for nearly seven years, and left him without a house for himself and his family.

On the eighth of May, 1777, general Floyd was appointed a senator of the state of New York, under the constitution of the state which had then been recently adopted. On the thirteenth of May, the provincial convention passed a resolution, that the thanks of the convention be given to him, and his colleagues, "delegates of the state of New York in the honourable the continental congress, for their long and faithful services rendered to the colony of New York and to the said state."

On the ninth of September, 1777, he took his seat in the senate of New York, at their first session under the new constitution. This being the first constitutional legislature since the colonial assembly was dissolved, it devolved upon them to organize the government, and adopt a code of laws, suited to existing circumstances. Of this body, he became a leading and influential member, and attended in his place, with some short intervals, until the sixth of November, 1778, when they adjourned.

On the fifteenth of October, 1778, he was unanimously re-elected a delegate to the continental congress, by a joint ballot of the senate and assembly, and on the second of January following, resumed his seat in that body, where he soon became actively employed on numerous committees, and con-

tinued in attendance until the ninth of June, when he obtained leave of absence.

On the twenty-fourth of August, 1779, the senate of New York again convened, and he continued to meet with them until the following December. The depreciation of the state currency having become, at this time, serious and alarming, a joint committee of the senate and house of assembly was appointed to take the subject into consideration. On the twenty-second of September, he made a report to the senate, founded upon the soundest principles of financial science. An equal and productive system of taxation was urged, as the best mode of supplying the public necessities, and preventing the further emission of paper money, and gradually reducing the amount in circulation, as the only effectual means of restoring it to credit. He was ever strongly opposed to anticipating the future resources of a state to satisfy the present exigencies, and having seen, in repeated instances, that from the want of capitalists in the country, the depreciation of the public credit, and consequent loss, far exceeded the real grounds for distrust, he considered a prompt and efficacious system of taxation as adequate to the demands of the public service, as the least burthensome in its operation, and as the surest guard against improvident expenditure. These principles he kept steadily in view during a long course of public service, and when he retired from public life, he had the satisfaction of leaving the finances of the state in a condition of unparalleled prosperity.

On the fourteenth of October, 1779, the legislature of New York appointed him, together with Ezra L'Houmedieu and John Sloss. Hobart, commissioner to attend a convention of the eastern states, for the purpose of adopting some regulations in relation to supplies of provisions, which, from extensive monopolies, had become scarce, and, in consequence of

the exorbitant prices demanded, threatened the land with famine.

Having been, on the eleventh of October, 1779, unanimously re-elected a delegate to the continental congress, he again attended in his place on the second of December. On the next day, he was elected a member of the board of admiralty, and on the thirteenth, was chosen a member of the treasury board. His health having become impaired by his incessant occupation, he applied to congress, on the first of March following, to be excused from the board of treasury, and on the first of April, he obtained leave of absence.

On the twenty-third of May, the senate of New York again convened, and on the twenty-seventh, they ordered the clerk to write to Mr. Floyd, and request his attendance in his place without delay. In compliance with this demand, he took his seat on the twentieth of June, and was appointed upon a joint committee to deliberate upon certain resolutions of congress, embracing all the most interesting relations existing between the state and general government. At this session, he strenuously opposed the pernicious principle of making the bills of credit a legal tender, in which he unhappily found himself in the minority. After a short adjournment, the senate was again convened on the seventh of September, and general Floyd was appointed upon the committee to draught a reply to the governor's address. The want of adequate powers in the general congress had become the source of serious embarrassment, and the inconvenience was, very generally, both perceived and felt. The governor, in his address, had pointedly drawn the attention of the legislature to this subject, and the committee, in their reply, responded to his sentiments in the following forcible manner : " Convinced from experience, that the want of adequate and defined powers in the directing council of the empire has been productive of much embarrassment, prevented that union of force or counsel so essential

to the weal of the confederacy, and evidently protracted the war, we will with great alacrity attempt to devise means, or concur in any which will conduce to accelerate the completion of such a confederation, as will confer on congress competent authority to draw from each member of the union, its proportion of aid for the common cause." In conformity with these views, a number of spirited resolutions were adopted before the close of the session, and ordered to be communicated to the other members of the confederacy.

On the twelfth of September, 1780, general Floyd was again elected a delegate to congress. He, however, continued his attendance in the senate, until they adjourned on the tenth of October, and on the fourth of December he resumed his seat in congress. As a delegate to this congress, he, with his colleagues from New York, had been authorised, by an act of the legislature, to designate the western limits of the state, and to cede to the United States their claim to the western territories. This, together with the contested claims of New York and New Hampshire to the territory now comprising the state of Vermont, involved him in a tedious and unpleasant official controversy, in which he perseveringly adhered to what he believed to be just, and due to the rights of the numerous individuals interested.

On the tenth of August, he nominated to congress Robert R. Livingston, Esq. to be secretary for foreign affairs, who was accordingly elected.

He was continued a delegate to congress by several successive appointments, and remained, with some short intermissions, a constant attendant until the twenty-sixth of April, 1783, when, having seen his country safely through a long and perilous war, he returned to his home after an exile of seven years. His return was hailed in his native county with great demonstrations of joy; many, through his influence, had remained faithful to the cause under every trial; nor would

they credit the restoration of peace, until they beheld him safely returned. He found his estate despoiled of almost every thing but the naked soil, through the malice and cupidity of the tories, who had resorted thither for plunder. His private concerns now demanding more of his attention than comported with his duties as a delegate to congress, he declined a re-election. He was, however, by several successive elections, continued a member of the senate until the year 1788, when, upon the adoption of the federal constitution, he was elected a member of the first congress, which met in New York on the fourth day of March, 1789. At the expiration of his term of service he again declined a re-election.

During his long attendance in the senate of the state of New York, he maintained a high and enviable rank, and generally presided in that body when the lieutenant governor left the chair. Under the administration of governor Clinton, and associated with the honourable Lewis Morris, Ezra L'Hommedieu, Zephania Platt, David Gelston, Samuel Jones, and others of equal worth, he contributed his influence to the adoption of a code of laws, which placed the rights of persons and of property upon the most substantial and permanent basis, and elevated the character of the state, for the excellence of its laws and institutions, to a rank unrivalled in the confederacy.

Having enumerated the principal events of his public life, it is proper, in this place, to offer a few observations in relation to his character.

Philosophers, in analysing the human mind, have distributed men into two grand classes: The one characterized particularly by practical and experimental skill, arising chiefly from a talent for minute, comprehensive, and rapid observation, a ready and retentive memory, and a presence of mind not to be disconcerted by extraordinary occurrences. The other comprehends what are called men of abstraction,

polishment. His political course was uniform and independent, and marked with a candour and sincerity which attracted the approbation of those who differed from him in opinion. The most flattering commentary upon his public life will be found in the frequent and constant proofs of popular favour, which he received for more than fifty years.

In private life he was fond of society, but always observed a measured decorum, which repressed familiarity, and chilled every approach at intimacy. He was highly respected in the society in which he lived, and left to his descendants a name of which they will long be proud.

Having, in the year 1784, purchased a tract of land, then uninhabited, upon the Mohawk river, and finding himself more at leisure, he undertook the improvement of it, and although he was now at an advanced period of life, succeeded, after devoting several successive summers to that object, in transforming it into a number of well cultivated farms. The western portion of the state of New York was at this time emerging from the wilderness of nature, and attracted by the extraordinary fertility of the soil, he determined, in the year 1803, to transfer his residence to his new estate.

In the year 1800, he was chosen one of the electors of president and vice president of the United States. His feelings had been excited by the conduct of the previous administration, endangering, as he thought, the permanency of our institutions, and neither the precarious state of his health, the remonstrances of his friends, nor a journey of two hundred miles, in the month of December, could prevent him from attending to support his early political friend and associate, Mr. Jefferson.

In 1801, he was elected a member of the convention to revise the constitution of the state of New York, and, at a subsequent period, served twice as presidential elector. At the earnest solicitation of his friends, he was once more elect-

ed a senator from the senatorial district into which he had removed, but, from the advanced period of his life, he was unable to bestow much attention to his public duties. In 1820, although he was unable, from the infirmities of age, to leave his home, he was again complimented with being named upon the electoral college.

His bodily strength and activity were remarkable for his years ; and he enjoyed an almost uninterrupted state of health until a year or two before his death : his mental vigour remained unimpaired to the last. A short time previous to his demise, he complained of an unusual debility : on the first of August, 1821, he was affected with a partial stagnation in the current of the blood, and expired on the fourth, at the age of eighty-seven years, meeting death with the characteristic firmness which distinguished him through life.

A decent tomb has been erected over his ashes ; but his name is inscribed upon the more imperishable monument of his country's independence. Unlike the tablets of brass and of marble, which perpetuate the fame of their heroes in the places where they are deposited, it issues from the mausoleum, and proclaims the equal rights of man to the great moral intelligence of the human race. To the benighted victims of oppression,—a pillar of fire to light them in the path to liberty ; and to the tyrants of the earth,—a scroll more appalling than that emblazoned upon the wall before Belshazzar, which caused the joints of his loins to be loosed, and his knees to smite together ; it will long be held in veneration as the charter of their national existence, by a grateful people, and will never be forgotten so long as liberty has a friend, and man yields homage to the empire of reason.

PHILIP LIVINGSTON.

THE solicitude already manifested to connect the obituary notices of the times with the events of the American revolution, and the natural propensity of mankind to trace their genealogy to celebrated sources, render it evident, that, with the progress of time, an increasing interest will be felt in the biography of those illustrious statesmen and soldiers who laid the foundation of the American empire, and that future and remote generations will be directed and stimulated in a career of distinguished patriotism, by meditating on the glorious achievements of a renowned ancestry. The authors of our independence will indeed occupy a higher rank in the veneration of posterity, than ever the founders of Rome attained in the estimation of the eternal city : and for the gratification of the present and all future times, it is now proper to collect the scattered notices of their personal and political history, to mould them into form, and to exhibit the result to the contemplation of an admiring world.

PHILIP LIVINGSTON, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was a member of a family, which has long been distinguished in the state of New York. His great grandfather was John Livingston, a celebrated divine in the church of Scotland, who emigrated in 1663 to Rotterdam,

it may appear, an additional impetus was given to these important propensities by emigrations commencing in 1735 from the Bermudas. The descendants of these different classes of emigrants have been among the most useful and distinguished inhabitants of New York. As the pursuit of commerce was the ruling passion of the times, the principal families of the city were engaged in it; and the young men were usually sent from the writing school to the counting house, and from thence to the West Indies. With the superior advantages of an excellent education, Mr. Livingston embarked in the same profession, and was soon engaged in extensive operations: and his inflexible integrity, and sagacious, enlarged and comprehensive views laid the foundation and erected the superstructure of extraordinary prosperity.

His first appearance in public life was in September, 1754, when he was elected an alderman of the east ward of the city of New York. That city then contained only a population of 10,881 souls. It was divided into seven wards, and the station of an alderman was considered important and respectable. He continued to exercise this office with universal approbation and signal usefulness for nine years, being annually elected by the freeholders and freemen of the city, entitled to vote in the ward which he represented.

On the sixteenth of December, 1758, the general assembly of the colony was dissolved by James Delancey, who was then lieutenant governor, and who administered the government in the room of Sir Charles Hardy, who had resigned as governor on being appointed a rear admiral in the British navy. A new house of assembly was consequently chosen, and being convened on the thirty-first of January, 1759, at the City Hall of the city of New York, elected William Nicoll, of Suffolk county, the speaker. This body then consisted of twenty-seven members, chosen from the following places:

City and County of New York,	4 members.
—— Albany,	2 "
County of Kings,	2 "
—— Queens,	2 "
—— Suffolk,	2 "
—— Richmond,	2 "
—— West Chester,	2 "
—— Dutchess,	2 "
—— Ulster,	2 "
—— Orange,	2 "
Borough of West Chester,	1 "
Township of Schenectady,	1 "
Manor of Rensselaerwyck,	1 "
Manor of Cortland,	1 "
Manor of Livingston,	1 "

The compensation of the members did not generally exceed six shillings per day, but the station was sought for with extreme solicitude, and was the subject of expensive and arduous contests. All the electors voted *viva voce*, and at one place. The candidates appeared on the hustings as in England, and no effort was spared, no expedient was omitted, by the rival claimants, to propitiate the public favour.

Mr. Livingston was, at that election, returned a member from the city of New York, and is denominated, in the colonial journals, alderman Philip Livingston, to distinguish him from his brother and other gentlemen of his name, who were also members. The functions of a colonial assembly did not comprehend a numerous population, a spacious area, extensive employment, or plenary power. The population of the whole colony did not exceed 100,000 souls, and, exclusive of Man-

battan, Staten and Long Islands, the settlements reached on the east side of the Hudson river to the boundaries of Connecticut and Massachusetts, and only a short distance to the west on the right bank of that river, from whence, to the possessions of France and to the borders of the Great Lakes, there was a vast region claimed by the colony, but occupied exclusively by Indian tribes and wild animals.

When the general assembly met in 1759, Great Britain was at war with France, and as the tendency of foreign controversy is to repress internal dissension, an harmonious intercourse existed between the different branches of the government. This state of things so desirable at all times, and particularly in seasons of public danger, had been rarely experienced since the lieutenant governor had attained an ascendancy in the province. He had formerly distracted and embroiled the community by his bold attempts on the independence of the governors, and his artful intrigues with the general assembly. His influence was probably derived more from vivacity of imagination and fascination of manners, than elaboration of intellect or purity of principle. His official communications do not bear the impress of great talents, so profusely ascribed to him in the publications of the times : nor did it appear that in the course of his administration, he ever suggested any plans calculated to subserve the general prosperity ; his views were entirely personal, and his projects evanescent and ephemeral ; and his whole aim was to consult the blandishments of popularity and the aspirations of ambition, without any solicitude for the prosperity and glory of his country.

The province co-operated with great zeal in a project to raise 20,000 men by the United Colonies for the purpose of subduing Canada. The legislature agreed to furnish 2080 men as the quota of New York. One hundred thousand

pounds were appropriated for levying, paying, and clothing the troops, and an advance of 150,000 pounds was made to the British commissariat, whose funds were exhausted. In consequence of similar spirited measures on the part of the sister colonies and the mother country, Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Niagara, and Quebec, were captured, and the subsequent year witnessed the subjugation of all Canada.

The talents and education of Mr. Livingston enabled him to take a distinguished part in the promotion of these important measures, and on other occasions of general and primary interest. Of the two standing committees on elections and new laws, then only existing, he was appointed chairman of the latter, and also a member of a grand joint committee, constituted to consider on the establishment of strong settlements on the frontiers as a barrier against the enemy.

In his legislative career he was particularly sedulous in the encouragement of agriculture and commerce, by facilitating communication with the ocean, and establishing the character of our productions in external or foreign markets. The various measures which he initiated, and the different bills which he brought in for these important purposes, may be seen in the journals of the colonial assembly, and bear ample testimony to the extent of his information, the power of his mind, and the ardour of his patriotism.

Each colony had a minister under the denomination of agent, to manage its concerns with the court of Great Britain. This agent was appointed by the representatives of the people exclusively, and an attempt in New York to make the appointment by the concurrence of all the branches of the colonial legislature, was put down at once by the general assembly. On the twenty-first of December, 1770, the celebrated Edmund Burke was unanimously chosen agent of New York, with a salary of five hundred pounds, in the room of Robert

Charles deceased. A regular correspondence was maintained between a committee of the general assembly and the agent. This committee was entrusted with the exterior interests, or foreign relations, of the province, and Mr. Livingston was appointed one of its members, an office of great trust and high importance ; and there can be no doubt that Mr. Burke derived from his communication with his constituents, those masterly and luminous views of the state of the colonies, which enabled him, in the British house of commons, to eclipse all competition, and to overwhelm all opposition.

In consequence of the death of the lieutenant governor, on the thirtieth of July, 1760, the administration devolved on Cadwallader Colden, president of the council, and afterwards lieutenant governor, a gentleman of distinguished talents and science : and in consequence of the dissolution of the general assembly by the demise of George II. a new one was chosen, (in which Mr. Livingston was re-elected,) which met at New York on the tenth of March, 1761.

At a meeting of the general assembly on the eleventh of September, 1764, Mr. Livingston reported an answer to lieutenant governor Colden's speech, which contained the following passage, deserving of the highest praise for its spirit of genuine patriotism, its recognition of the orthodox principles of the revolution, and its laying the foundation of that opposition and resistance which produced the glorious work of American independence : " But nothing can add to the pleasure we receive from the information your honour gives us, that his majesty, our most gracious sovereign, distinguishes and approves our conduct. When his service requires it; we shall ever be ready to exert ourselves with loyalty, fidelity, and zeal ; and, as we have always complied in the most dutiful manner with every requisition made by his directions, we, with all humility, hope that his majesty, who, and whose an-

cestors, have long been the guardians of British liberty, will so protect us in our rights, as to prevent our falling into the abject state of being for ever hereafter incapable of doing what can merit either his distinction or approbation. Such must be the deplorable state of that wretched people, who (being taxed by a power subordinate to none, and in a great degree unacquainted with their circumstances,) can call nothing their own. This we speak with the greatest deference to the wisdom and justice of the British parliament, in which we confide. Depressed with this prospect of inevitable ruin, by the alarming information we have from home, neither we nor our constituents can attend to improvements conducive either to the interests of our mother country or of this colony. We shall, however, renew the act for granting a bounty on hemp, still hoping that a stop may be put to those measures, which, if carried into execution, will oblige us to think that nothing but extreme poverty can preserve us from the most insupportable bondage. We hope your honour will join with us in an endeavour to secure that great badge of English liberty, of being taxed only with our own consent, to which we conceive all his majesty's subjects at home and abroad equally entitled to."

This decided and energetic stand against the usurpations of Great Britain was followed up, at subsequent meetings, by eloquent and animated representations to the king, lords, and commons, written with great spirit and ability: and it appears, that in October, 1765, a committee from the general assembly met the several committees from the different governments on the continent, "to consult on the present circumstances of the colonies, and the difficulties to which they are and must be reduced, by the operation of the acts of parliament for laying duties and taxes on the colonies, and to consider of a general and united, dutiful, loyal, and humble

representation of their condition to his majesty, and to implore relief." The proceedings of this congress were approved by the colonial assembly of New York, and remonstrances of a similar character and tendency were unanimously adopted by that body.

The governor, Sir Henry Moore, having dissolved the general assembly, a new general election was held, which resulted highly favourable to the whig party, or the party in opposition to British assumptions. Several new members were elected, who afterwards made a distinguished figure in the revolution. Among these were George Clinton, the first governor, and Pierre Van Cortland, the first lieutenant governor of the state, general Philip Schuyler, general Abraham Ten Broeck, Charles De Witt, and Henry Wisner. This illustrious band and their compatriots selected Mr. Livingston, returned again from New York for their head, and on the twenty-seventh of October, 1768, he was unanimously chosen speaker by twenty-four members who had convened, and was presented, according to the forms of the British house of commons, to the governor, as the representative of royalty, for his approbation, which was given as a matter of course.

The proceedings of this assembly were correspondent with the exalted character of its presiding officer and leading members.

In December of this year, resolutions were adopted asserting the rights of the colonies against parliamentary usurpation: a correspondence was opened with the other provinces, and remonstrances prepared against the unwarrantable assumptions of Great Britain. The royal governor, taking umbrage at these proceedings, dissolved the general assembly on the second of January, 1769, and a new one was elected, which met at the usual place on the fourth of April following.

Although a majority of this body consisted of the creatures of the crown, yet some of the most distinguished members of the whig party were re-elected—Clinton, Van Cortland, Schuyler, Ten Broeck, and De Witt. Mr. Livingston declined an election for New York, and after a violent contest in that city, where one thousand five hundred and fifteen votes were taken, the candidates adverse to the popular party were elected. He was, however, returned as a member from the manor of Livingston; but, being in a minority, was not brought forward as speaker.

On the twelfth of April, Mr. Livingston made the following motion:—

“Mr. Speaker, as every art is at this time made use of, by the enemies of American liberty, to infuse jealousies and distrusts of each other in the minds of his majesty’s most faithful subjects, within the several colonies; and, in order thereto, reports have been spread, and industriously propagated, that the house of assembly, lately chosen for the dominion of Virginia, will, at their next meeting, rescind or take back the resolves of the late patriotic assembly of that province; and, as it is very probable that the like report will, for the same purpose, be propagated with regard to the sentiments of this house; to prevent the evil effects of such sinister practices, and to evince to our constituents that we fully agree in opinion with the last general assembly, I move that the house concur in sentiments with the last general assembly, with respect to the subject-matter of the resolves entered in the journals of that house on the thirty-first of December last, and that the said resolution be entered on the journals of this house.”

This motion was postponed from time to time, and never acted on. But Mr. Livingston was marked out as an object of ministerial vengeance; and, on the very same day, Mr.

Thomas moved to vacate his seat on account of his not being a resident of the manor of Livingston. When this motion was made, Mr. (afterwards governor) Clinton was greatly irritated, and observed that it contained so much false orthography and vicious syntax, it would reflect great dishonour on the house, as well as on the mover, should it be entered as it then stood. He therefore moved, that Mr. Thomas be ordered to correct his said motion before it appears on the journal of the house. Thereupon it was ordered that Mr. Thomas correct his said motion, which he having corrected accordingly, it was received, and Mr. Clinton then moved that he should pay costs if his motion for dismissing Mr. Livingston should appear vexatious and frivolous, which was overruled. These anomalous proceedings form a striking commentary on the acrimony of party, and the state of education.

The consideration of Mr. Thomas's resolution was postponed until the twelfth of May, and in the mean time Mr. Livingston irritated anew the inimical spirit against him, by bringing in a bill "to vacate the seat of any present or future member of general assembly who shall accept of any post or place of honour, profit, or trust, under the crown, after his being elected a member to serve in general assembly." This bill of course did not pass.

When Mr. Thomas's resolution was considered, it appeared that Mr. Livingston was a freeholder of the manor of Livingston; that for fifty-three years, except in three instances, the manor was represented by non-residents, and that, in twenty-one out of twenty-four cases, non-residents were permitted to represent counties. In pursuance of predetermined hostility, his seat was vacated by seventeen to six votes, and his legislative career in that body terminated. The general assembly, from that period, continued devoted

to British supremacy. As late down as the seventeenth February, 1775, a motion was made to thank Philip Livingston and his colleagues, for their conduct as delegates to the continental congress, held at Philadelphia in September and October previously, which was negatived.

Mr. Livingston was chosen a member of the first congress, which met at Philadelphia on the fifth of September, 1774. In this assembly he took a distinguished part and was appointed on the committee to prepare an address to the people of Great Britain.

This illustrious body adjourned on the twenty-sixth day of October, and re-assembled on the tenth May, 1775.

A provincial convention, held at the city of New York on the twenty-second of April, 1775, and formed of deputies from New York, Albany, Dutchess, Ulster, Orange, Westchester, King's, and Suffolk counties, appointed Philip Livingston, George Clinton, James Duane, John Alsop, Simon Boerum, William Floyd, John Jay, Henry Wisner, Philip Schuyler, Lewis Morris, Francis Lewis, and Robert R. Livingston, jr. delegates to that congress, who, or any five of them, were entrusted with full power to concert with the delegates from the other colonies, and determine upon such measures as should be judged most effectual for the preservation and re-establishment of American rights and privileges, and for the restoration of harmony between Great Britain and the colonies.

Mr. Livingston, together with several of his colleagues, attended this congress, and on the fourth of July, 1776, he, together with William Floyd, Francis Lewis, and Lewis Morris, affixed their signatures to the Declaration of Independence in behalf of the state of New York, and on the ninth of the same month, the convention of New York, assembled at White Plains, unanimously sanctioned the measure.

On the fifteenth of July, 1776, he was chosen by congress a member of the board of treasury, and on the twenty-ninth of April following, a member of the marine committee; two important trusts, in which the safety and well-being of America were essentially involved.

On the thirteenth of May, 1777, the state convention re-elected him to congress, and thanked him and his colleagues for their long and faithful services, rendered to the colony and state of New York.

His attendance in the continental congress did not, however, preclude his employment at home in affairs of importance. On the twenty-second November, 1774, he was elected a member of the association formed to execute the plan of commercial interdiction against Great Britain. On the twentieth of April, 1775, he was appointed president of the provincial congress assembled in New York. On the first of February, 1776, he was unanimously chosen a member of the general assembly for the city of New York. On the sixteenth of April, following, he was selected as a delegate of the next provincial congress, and in the ensuing June, he was chosen to serve in the same body the next year, with the additional power of framing a new government or constitution for the colony.

On the twentieth of April, 1777, the constitution of the state was adopted at Kingston. On the eighth of May following, Mr. Livingston was chosen a senator under it, for the southern district, and on the tenth of September, he attended in that capacity the first meeting of the first legislature of the state of New York.

On the second of October, 1777, he, together with James Duane, Francis Lewis, William Duer, and Gouverneur Morris, were elected by the legislature the first delegates to congress, under the constitution of the state.

On the fifth of May, 1778, he took his seat in congress, at the most critical and gloomy period of the revolution. That body had retired to York in Pennsylvania, after the British had taken possession of Philadelphia. Mr. Livingston had been requested by the state government to attend and devote his faculties to the salvation of his country. Although feeble in body and low in health, he consented to forego all considerations but those of patriotism. His family were at that time in Kingston, and previous to his departure for congress, he visited his relatives in Albany, and after his return he addressed to them a valedictory letter, expressing his firm conviction that he never would see them again; this opinion he reiterated to his family when he bade them a final adieu. It was a subject of great regret to governor Clinton, that imperious considerations had induced him to urge the measure. On the twelfth of June, he died, deprived of the consolations of home and the society of all his family except his son Henry, a youth of eighteen, who, on hearing of his father's illness, immediately left the family of general Washington, where he resided, to perform the last duties to his dying father. The filial piety and uncommon intelligence of this excellent young man are forcibly portrayed in the following letter, dated at York town, on the fourteenth of June, 1778, which he wrote to his brother-in-law, Dr. Thomas Jones, announcing the melancholy event to the family.

"My Dear Sir: I sincerely lament that Providence has made it necessary to address my friends on so mournful an occasion as the present. Oh! for words to soften their distress and lessen the bitter pangs of grief! I feel myself unequal to the duty, and utterly at a loss what to say.

"My dear friend! have you received my letter of the eleventh? it was written with intent to prepare the minds of the family for the melancholy subject of this, and to prevent,

in some measure, the effects of a too sudden impression. Unhappily, my apprehensions were not ill founded, for the disorder was too malignant and obstinate to struggle with.

“Must I tell you! my dear father expired early on the morning of the twelfth, and was buried the same evening. The funeral was conducted in a manner suitable to his worth and station, being attended by all the military in town, the congress, the strangers of distinction, and the most respectable citizens.

“My dear mother and sister! grieve not immoderately even at the loss of an excellent husband and parent! consider that worth and excellence cannot exempt one from the lot of human nature, for no sooner do we enter the world than we begin to leave it. It is not only natural, but commendable, to regret the loss of so tender a connexion, but what can an excess of sorrow avail?

“I propose to set off for Hurly in two or three days, and I hope, dear sir, by your influence and consolation, to find the family as composed as this distressing event will allow.

“That Heaven may inspire them with fortitude to support this heavy trial in a becoming manner, is my ardent wish.”

On the twelfth of June, congress adopted the following resolution:

“Congress being informed that Mr. P. Livingston, one of the delegates for the state of New York, died last night, and that circumstances require that his corpse be interred this evening,

“Resolved, that congress will in a body attend the funeral this evening at six o'clock, with a crape round the arm, and will continue in mourning for the space of one month.

“Ordered, that Mr. Lewis, Mr. Duer, and Mr. G. Morris, be a committee to superintend the funeral, and that the

Rev. Mr. Duffield, the attending chaplain, be notified to officiate on the occasion."

Previous to the severance of the British empire, the population and opulence of the province of New York were confined within narrow limits; and institutions of public utility for the diffusion of knowledge, the cultivation of benevolence, and the development of the public resources, were scarcely thought of, until Mr. Livingston and his contemporaries co-operated in laying the foundation of several establishments, which have demonstrated, by their increasing and expanded benefits, the wisdom and public spirit of their authors.

In those days, as we are told by Smith the historian, the men collected themselves into weekly clubs, and New York was one of the most social places on the continent. The intimate associates of Mr. Livingston, were William Livingston, his brother, afterwards governor of New Jersey, Robert R. Livingston, a judge of the supreme court, William Alexander, earl of Sterling, William Smith, afterwards chief justice of Canada, and John Morin Scott, an eminent counsellor at law. It would be difficult to select at any period, or in any place, a more splendid constellation, or an equal number of men combining greater endowments and more exalted qualities of intellect, and superior elevation of character. At one of the evening meetings of these distinguished men, in 1754, the plan of a public library was suggested, and it was promptly carried into execution. Mr. Livingston's name is mentioned in the charter of the New York City Library as one of those who, in 1754, set on foot a subscription to erect a public library, and who were afterwards incorporated in 1772. It was originally contemplated to erect an edifice for a museum and observatory, as well as library. but that part of the plan has not been realized.

A charter was granted for a hospital in New York, in 1771, of which Mr. Livingston was one of the first governors. He was also one of the founders of the chamber of commerce, which was incorporated the antecedent year: and he aided in the establishment of King's, now Columbia, college.

He married Christina the daughter of Colonel Dirck Ten Broeck, by whom he had five sons and three daughters. Few men have been more favoured in the respectability and prosperity of their connexions: he could look back on his ancestors with a proud consciousness that they always stood in the first ranks of distinguished citizens; he could also realize the same conviction in his contemporary relatives; and if Providence had prolonged his valuable life to the present time, he would have seen, in his numerous descendants, characters exceeded by none, in those accomplishments which adorn society, and in those virtues which give dignity to human nature.

The life of Mr. Livingston was distinguished for inflexible rectitude and patriotic devotion. He was also a firm believer in the sublime truths of religion, and an humble follower of our divine Redeemer.

Of his patriotism we have furnished various and decided evidence. The following instance of magnanimity and public spirit deserves to be recorded. Shortly after his nomination as a delegate to congress, in 1774, several gentlemen addressed a letter to him and his colleagues, in which they were requested, in order to avoid the inconveniences of a contested election, to state explicitly, whether they would engage to use their utmost endeavours at the proposed congress, that an agreement not to import goods from Great Britain, until the American grievances should be redressed, should be entered into by the colonies. In answer to which they observed, that they would do every thing in their power, which, in their opinion, would be conducive to the general interests of

the colonies, and that, at present, they thought the proposed measure the most efficacious that could be adopted : but they concluded with saying ; “ Permit us to add, that we make this declaration of our sentiments because we think it right, and not as an inducement to be favoured with your votes ; nor have we the least objection to your electing any other gentlemen, as your delegates, in whom you repose greater confidence.” This manly avowal was succeeded by a unanimous election ; and when the time approached for them to enter on their duties, in September, 1774, they were escorted to the vessel, in which they embarked, with all those testimonials of respect due to their character and their cause ; and when, on the eighth of May following, they again left New York to resume their arduous functions in congress, they were attended by a great train of their fellow citizens to the ferry, of which about five hundred crossed over with them.

As one of the founders of American independence, he foresaw the difficulties, perplexities, sacrifices, and dangers, that were to be encountered ; and, in its earliest stages, he proceeded with that wisdom and circumspection which were demanded by his age, experience and character ; and which served as a salutary check on the more animated career of some of his youthful associates. When, however, it became necessary to draw the sword, and to sever the empire ; when petitions were answered by insults, and the demands of freemen were met by the bayonet ; then he did not hesitate to assume the highest responsibilities, and to put in jeopardy his life and a large estate. During the whole of the revolutionary war, he and his family were in a state of exile ; and they were even pursued, in their sequestered retreat at Kingston, by the conflagrations of a British army. A short time previous to his demise, he sold a portion of his property to sustain the public credit, and with a full presentiment of approaching death,

arising from the nature of his complaint, which was a hydrothorax, or dropsy in the chest, he did not hesitate to relinquish the sweets of home, and the endearments of a beloved family, and devote the last remnant of his illustrious life to the service of his country, then enveloped in the thickest gloom of adversity.

In his temper, Mr. Livingston was somewhat irritable, yet exceedingly mild, tender, and affectionate to his family and friends. There was a dignity, with a mixture of austerity, in his deportment, which rendered it difficult for strangers to approach him, and which made him a terror to those who swerved from the line, or faltered in the path, of personal virtue and patriotic duty. He was silent and reserved, and seldom indulged with much freedom in conversation. Fond of reading, and endowed with a solid and discriminating understanding, his mind was replenished with various extensive and useful knowledge.

He possessed, in an extraordinary degree, an intuitive perception of character. He saw, at one glance, into the souls of men, and every man carried a window in his bosom, with regard to him, through which his penetrating eyes could observe the minute lineaments, as well as the great outlines, of character. This deep insight into men and things rendered him peculiarly useful in the important drama of the American revolution.

His last moments were correspondent with the tenor of his well-spent life. He met, with characteristic firmness and christian fortitude, the trying hour which separated him from this world.

He taught us how to live, and (oh ! too high
The price for knowledge,) taught us how to die.



FRANCIS LEWIS.

FRANCIS LEWIS was born in the month of March, 1713, at Landaff in the shire of Glamorgan, South Wales, where his father was established as a protestant episcopal clergyman. His mother was the daughter of the Reverend Dr. Pettingal, a clergyman of the same profession, in Caernarvonshire, North Wales. He was their only child ; but death soon deprived him of his natural guardians, and left him an orphan at the age of four or five years. At this tender stage of life, he was consigned to the care of a maternal maiden aunt, named Llawelling, who resided in Caernarvon. A strong and proud attachment to her country was a peculiar feature in the character of this respectable lady, who appears to have been devoted to every thing connected with the ancient British : hence she took particular pains to render her nephew, in early youth, master of the Cymraeg, or native language of his country ; a knowledge of which he retained through the course of his life : he was also sent to Scotland, where he acquired, in the family of a highland relation, the Gaelic language, which is said to be the oldest and purest dialect of the Celtic.

When young Lewis had arrived at the proper age, he was transferred to the tutelage of a maternal uncle, then Dean of St Paul's, in London, by whom he was placed at Westminster school, where he completed his education and became a

good classic scholar. He then entered the counting-room of a merchant in the city of London, where he served a regular clerkship, and acquired a very extensive and judicious knowledge of commerce, which became the occupation of his future life. When he attained the age of twenty-one years, he came into possession of a moderate amount of property, which he converted into merchandize, and embarked with it for the city of New York, where he arrived in the spring of 1735. Finding that his cargo was too extensive for the New York market, he formed a commercial connexion with Mr. Edward Annesley, a descendant of the ancient Anglesey family, and repaired with a portion of his merchandize to Philadelphia, leaving his partner to dispose of the residue in New York.

At the expiration of two years, he returned to New York, where he permanently established his residence and engaged extensively in navigation and foreign trade. At this period he married Elizabeth Annesley, the sister of his partner : the offspring of this connexion was seven children, four of whom died during infancy, and the three younger lived to become the parents of a numerous progeny.

One of his first shipments to Europe consisted of an entire cargo of wheat ; and he frequently remarked, that, from its novelty, it was at that time the subject of much conversation. The port of New York being inadequate to the supply of a full freight for the vessel, he was compelled to send her round to Philadelphia to complete her lading : the average price of wheat was three shillings and four pence, currency, per bushel. In the prosecution of his mercantile pursuits, which exhibited peculiar perseverance and enterprise, he traversed a great part of the continent of Europe. He was twice in Russia, and visited all her sea-ports from Petersburg to Archangel : he also visited the Orkney and Shetland Islands, and was twice shipwrecked on the coast of Ireland.

In the year 1749, notwithstanding the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, the contest between the English and French colonies relative to boundaries, was revived. The most extensive field of controversy was the vast and interesting plan formed by the French government, for connecting Louisiana to Canada, by a chain of forts. This scheme excited the most serious alarm throughout the British colonies, as the settlements of the French extending from north to south, necessarily interfered with the charters granted by the crown to the first English adventurers, which extended from the Atlantic to the Southern ocean. France, however, insisted on confining the British territory to the eastern side of the Apalachian or Alleghany mountains, claiming the whole country whose waters run into the Mississippi, in virtue of her right as the first discoverer of that river. From the progress of the dispute, it soon became apparent that it would be decided by the sword alone, notwithstanding the great disparity of numbers in favour of the British colonies. The governors of Canada had, for many preceding years, been employed in fortifying such situations as would give their nation most influence with the Indians: they had thus acquired the command of Lake Champlain, and a connected chain of posts was maintained from Quebec up the St. Lawrence and along the great lakes. A grant obtained from the British crown, by the Ohio company, for six hundred thousand acres of land, lying in the country claimed by both nations, accelerated the approach of war. The governor of Canada deeming the establishment of trading houses, and the employment of persons to survey the country, by this association, an intrusion into the dominions of his Christian majesty, seized the British traders, and imprisoned them at Presqu' Isle, on Lake Erie. In November, 1753, major Washington, who afterwards guided the revolutionary storm, was despatched to the command-

ant of the French forces on the Ohio, requiring him to withdraw from the dominions of his Britannic majesty. The French general, refusing to comply with this message, preparations were immediately made in Virginia, to assert the rights of the British crown. The earl of Holderness, secretary of state, had ordered the governors of the several states to repel by force, and endeavour to dislodge the French from the posts on the Ohio. A convention was called in Albany, where a plan of union was agreed to ; but it was objected to, both in England and America, and it was finally determined to carry on the war with British troops, aided by provincial re-enforcements.

The defeat of colonel Washington, at Little Meadows, and the establishment of the post on the Ohio, were considered by the British government as the commencement of war in America, and early in the year 1755, general Braddock was sent from Ireland with a very respectable body of troops, destined to serve in the anticipated hostilities. As soon as the plan of the campaign had been digested, Braddock marched towards Fort Du Quesne, for the purpose of investing it. When within about seven miles of the fort, he fell into an ambuscade of French and Indians, by whom he was defeated and mortally wounded. So great was the carnage, that every officer on horseback, excepting Washington, was killed or wounded. Sixty-four out of eighty-five officers, and about half the privates, were killed and wounded. The two northern expeditions which had been planned against Niagara and Crown Point, though not so disastrous, were neither of them successful. Thus ended the campaign of 1755, and excepting the expulsion of the French from Nova Scotia, no single enterprise was crowned with success.

Governor Shirley, having abandoned the expedition against Niagara, left a garrison of seven hundred men in Oswego,

with directions to complete the works of that place, and returned to Albany, where he immediately called a grand council of war, for the purpose of preparing a plan for the campaign of 1756. It was determined by the council to make every exertion for the reduction of Crown Point and Niagara, with the other posts on Lake Ontario, and Fort Du Quesne. About this time, monsieur de Montcalm, an able and intelligent officer, who succeeded Dieskau in the command of the French troops in Canada, formed a plan for the reduction of Oswego, which his activity rendered successful. Colonel Mersey (called in British history Mercer) held the command of the fort, and Mr. Lewis was present, as agent for supplying the British troops with clothing. Being the particular friend and early companion of the commandant, he resolved to remain with him, in the capacity of aid, on the investment of the fort. Montcalm, while the British and Americans were adjusting their difficulties respecting rank, and deliberating whether to attack Niagara or Fort Du Quesne, advanced at the head of about five thousand Europeans, Canadians, and Indians, against Oswego. He brought up his artillery with great rapidity, and opened a battery which played on the fort with considerable effect. Colonel Mersey was killed by the side of Mr. Lewis, and in a few hours the place was declared by the engineers to be no longer tenable. To prevent an assault, the garrison, consisting of the regiments of Shirley and Peperel, amounting to one thousand six hundred men, capitulated, and were made prisoners of war. At the close of the war, the British government conferred on Mr. Lewis five thousand acres of land, in consideration of his military services.

After the surrender of Fort Oswego, it is reported that Montcalm barbarously gave permission to the chief warrior of the savages, who composed a part of his forces, to select

about thirty of the garrison as his portion of the prisoners Mr. Lewis was included among the number, and it is handed down by tradition that, in this fearful extremity, his life was preserved by a certain resemblance which existed between the Welsh and the Indian tongues. It is said that he discovered, soon after his merciless surrender to the savages, so strong an affinity between their languages and that of the Cymraeg, that he was enabled to make known to them all his wants. This unexpected circumstance gained the good-will and protection of the chief, who conducted him in safety to Montreal, and delivered him to the French governor, with the request that he might be permitted to return home to his family without ransom: this favour, however, was denied, and he was sent in a cartel to France for exchange.

The coincidence said to exist between the Welsh and Gaelic dialects of the Celtic tongue, and the language spoken by the aboriginal Mingoes, and the reputed emigration of Madoc and his Cambrian followers, have, for a long time, ranked as a doubtful and controverted point. The late major Amos Stoddard, who was killed at the battle of Miami, was a firm believer, together with many other scientific men, in the existence of Indians in North America speaking the Welsh tongue; and in his valuable "Sketches of Louisiana," he has devoted a chapter to the discussion of the subject. The Welsh emigrants are said to have migrated to America three hundred years before the days of Columbus; a fact which is recorded by three Welsh historians or bards, and their existence in our forests is attested by various transient travellers. Many arguments are adduced in support of this opinion, which appear to possess great weight: but, it must be recollected, that no theory, however unfounded and delusive, has ever been formed, which has not derived some plausibility, however fleeting, from the superficial reasoning of the speculative

and ingenious philosopher. It is urged that the Welsh had as powerful motives for colonization as any other people, because they had been for a long series of years subject to every species of violence and oppression ; and that the great military talents and powerful resources of Henry II., during whose reign the emigration took place, created peculiar terror among the Welsh nation. Moreover, Wales was generally governed by a number of petty princes, who frequently waged destructive wars against each other : hence, invaded from without, and convulsed within, the Welsh had strong motives to abandon their country, and to hazard their lives in pursuit of another, especially at a time when they had lost all hopes of maintaining their liberties. Great stress is laid upon the opinions which have existed among the learned relative to the origin of the aborigines of America, some of whom maintain that they are sprung from Asia, some from Africa, and others from the north of Europe ; and it is triumphantly demanded, why is it not as likely that Wales furnished a population for America, as some of those countries, particularly Africa and the north of Europe ? The migration of Madoc, the son of Owen Gwyneth, in the year 1170, is recorded in the history of Wales, written by Caradoc, in the Welsh language, translated into English by Lloyd, and published by Dr. David Powel, in 1584 : the supposed fact is founded on the poems of Meredyth ap Ryhs, Guytin Owen, and Cynfryg ap Grew. The first of these bards flourished in 1470, and the two last in 1480. Several historians have mentioned the voyages of Madoc, and seem to consider them as indisputable ; and many anecdotes have been cited to prove, from time to time, the actual existence of the Welsh tongue in our own country. One Morgan Jones, a Welshman, was taken prisoner by the Tascaroras on Pontigo river, in the year 1660, and being informed that he must prepare for death, he exclaimed

in the Welsh language, "have I escaped so many dangers, and must I now be knocked on the head like a dog?" Thereupon, a war-chief approached and embraced him, telling him, in the same language, that he should not die. Dr. Williams mentions that a certain young man was taken prisoner by the Indians in Virginia, soon after the settlement of it, and that he saved his life by the knowledge he had of their language, which was Welsh. "They produced a book, which he found to be the Bible, but which they could not read." In the "British Remains," published in 1777, it is asserted that one Stedman was on the coast of America in a Dutch vessel about thirty years before, and that when he was about to land, the natives strongly opposed him; but, understanding their language, which was Welsh, he spoke to them, when they became exceedingly courteous. It is also stated that the master of an English privateer or pirate, in repairing his vessel near Florida, became acquainted with the Indian tongue spoken there, which was afterwards found to be Welsh. Father Charlevoix, a credulous French missionary, travelled from Canada to the Mississippi, in 1721, and was informed by certain Indians called the Aiouaz, (Iowas,) that certain other Indians called the Omans, had *white skin and fair hair*: the good father also declared that he had great reason to believe that there were on this continent some Spaniards, or European colonies, much more north than any then known in Mexico or California. Carver, who passed the winter of 1766 among the Scioux on the river St. Pierre, was informed that a nation rather smaller and *whiter* than the neighbouring tribes, lived about the heads of the Missouri. A Welshman, named Griffith, was taken prisoner by the Shawnee Indians, about the year 1764, and two years after his captivity, accompanied five Indians, who resolved to penetrate to the source of the Missouri. On the Shining Mountains they accidentally met

with three *white men* in the Indian dress, and accompanied them to their village, where they found the whole nation of the same complexion. It having been determined to put the strangers to death, Griffith addressed the council in Welsh, and explaining the motives of their journey, full confidence was immediately restored. A Frenchman informed major Stoddard, in 1805, that being one of a party employed to explore the Missouri, he entered a large lake situated on the summit of the Shining Mountains, from which the Missouri flows ; that he descended another river which issued towards the west, on which he remained eleven days ; and that he discovered, from his inquiries, that there was a numerous and singular nation of Indians about the lake, who were not in the least tawny, but rather of a yellowish complexion, a great number of whom had red hair on their heads. Vancouver found a people in the vicinity of Columbia river, speaking a language different from that of their neighbours, and in features resembling the northern Europeans. Lewis and Clark discovered some people near the mouth of the same river, who had red or sandy hair. One Benjamin Sutton informed an Indian missionary, named Beatty, in 1766, that he was at an Indian town, a very considerable distance above New Orleans, whose inhabitants were of different complexions, not so tawny as those of the other Indians, and who spoke Welsh ; that he saw a book among them which he supposed was the Welsh Bible, which they could not read ; and that he heard some Indians among the Shawnees speak Welsh with a native of Wales, by the name of Lewis. A certain Levi Hicks told the same missionary, that he once attended an embassy in a town of Indians on the west side of the Mississippi, who talked Welsh. Captain Isaac Stewart was taken prisoner by the Indians, in 1764, and conducted to the Wabash. Having been redeemed from captivity by a Spanish traveller, he took

his departure in his company to the westward, and on Rouge, or Red river, found a nation of Indians remarkably white, and whose hair was of a reddish colour. A Welshman, named John David, was one of the party, and understood their language, it being little different from the Welsh.

These authorities, it is objected, if they prove any thing, prove too much; because they allude to a Welsh tribe in Virginia, to a second in Florida, to a third on Red River, to a fourth on the Mississippi, to a fifth on the Missouri, and perhaps to a sixth on the Wabash; and they could not have become so numerous, or so much dispersed, as to occupy these different and distant regions. But this solid argument is rebutted in a very summary manner, by calculating, on conjectural data, the number of Welsh Indians to have been in 1660, when they were first discovered, precisely one million one hundred and twenty six thousand, four hundred. Madoc is gratuitously supposed to have sailed, in his three voyages, with twenty ships—each of those vessels is supposed to have carried fifty-five colonists, making, in the aggregate, eleven hundred—five hundred years are supposed to have elapsed from the time of their migration to the date of their discovery; and to close these suppositions, the emigrants are supposed to have doubled their population once in every fifty years. The dispersion of the settlers is attributed to the death of Madoc, and the augmented population of the Welsh, which created divisions among them, terminated in their separation under different chiefs.

But, notwithstanding these plausible authorities and arguments, it is the opinion of the most learned and eminent philosophers of this country, that all the stories which have been circulated relative to the Welsh Indians, are undeserving of the least credit. The testimony of three persons to prove the existence of a Welsh Bible among at least two tribes of

these savages, and the circumstance that these three persons lived at different eras, and indeed in different centuries, and were wholly unconnected and unknown to each other, are considered as irresistibly convincing. On what ground, say the advocates of Welsh emigration, shall we consider their testimony, as well as that of many other persons, as the result of artifice or fraud, especially as it illustrates the same points, grows out of different occasions, and was published nearly at the same time? This question is readily resolved. It is well known that the sacred scriptures were not translated into modern languages until after the reformation: how then could a Welsh Bible have been brought to America by Prince Madoc or his followers?

It can be undoubtedly shown that the anecdote related of Mr. Lewis is legendary, and founded in error. It is said that he conversed in the Welsh tongue with the aboriginal *Mingoes*. Now the language of the Mingoes is well known in its various dialects, which vary little from each other. They are the Iroquois, or, as we call them, the Six Nations, and we possess grammars, dictionaries, and vocabularies, of their idioms. Those scientific men who have read and studied these works, and who have conversed with the native Indians of those nations, positively assert that their language bears no affinity whatever to the Welsh, nor to any other European tongue. The Welsh, according to Adelung, who has carefully analyzed it, is, in affinity, one-half with the Low German, one-fourth with the Latin, and the remaining fourth is pure Celtic. Its physiognomy, its grammatical forms, the etymology of its words, bear not the slightest resemblance to the Mingo or Iroquois, nor to any other known Indian language.

It is, therefore, certain that the current report in relation to the cause which procured the liberation of Mr. Lewis,

arise from 'misconceptions.' Such tales are produced by the love of the marvellous which is inherent in our nature. Not long since, a gentleman of South Carolina, travelling in the Indian country with an African slave, was astonished to find that he and the Indians understood each other perfectly. We ought to be the first to discredit these fables. If, on the contrary, our men of letters take pains to propagate them, they will shed disgrace on our literature, and make us the laughing-stock of scientific men abroad.

From the termination of the Canadian war, to the commencement of the revolution, Mr. Lewis uniformly co-operated with those early patriots who opposed the gradual encroachments of the British government on the rights of the American people. He was one of the first to enrol his name among the "sons of liberty,"—an association which exhibited the earliest dawn of a determination to resist force by force. When it was attempted to put the stamp act in operation, he retired from business to his country seat on Long Island, where he continued to reside until the year 1771. Being then desirous of establishing his eldest son in the mercantile profession, he embarked with him for England, and towards the close of that year returned with a large quantity of dry-goods, and recommenced business under the firm of Francis Lewis and son. On the commencement of hostilities in 1774-5, he again retired from commercial pursuits.

The patriotism, firmness, integrity, and abilities, which had characterised the career of Mr. Lewis for almost half a century, pointed him out to his fellow citizens as a fit representative to the continental congress, when these eminent qualifications alone could insure success to the efforts of a weak and struggling people; and at a provincial convention, formed of deputies from the city and county of New York, the city and county of Albany, and the counties of Dutchess, Ulster,

Orange, West Chester, King's, and Suffolk, held in New York on the twenty-second of April, 1775, he was unanimously elected a delegate, with full power to concert and determine on such measures as should be judged most effectual for the preservation and re-establishment of American rights and privileges, and for the restoration of harmony between Great Britain and the colonies. On the twenty-first of December, 1775, he was continued, by the provincial congress of New York, a delegate from that state for the year 1776, and affixed his signature to the Declaration of Independence with a pride and exultation, only equalled by the ardour with which he supported its adoption. In a convention of the representatives of the state of New York, held at White Plains, on the ninth of July, 1776, the conduct of her congressional delegates was, as has been mentioned, fully approved, and it was unanimously resolved that the reasons assigned by the continental congress for declaring the united colonies free and independent states, were cogent and conclusive; and that, while they lamented the cruel necessity which had rendered that measure unavoidable, they would, at the risk of their lives and fortunes, unite with the other colonies in supporting it.

At the election held at Kingston, by the representatives of New York, on the thirteenth of May, 1777, Mr. Lewis was not included in the representation to congress, but received the formal thanks of the convention for his long and faithful services rendered to the colony and state of New York. At the first meeting, however, of the legislature, he was again elected a delegate, on the second of October, 1777, and appeared in his place on the fifth of the following December. On the sixteenth of October, 1778, he was, for the fourth and last time, appointed to represent the state in the national legislature. On the twenty-seventh of April, 1779, he obtained leave of absence, which appears to have terminated his career in congress, after a long, laborious, and energetic dispo-

of the patriotism and abilities which had procured him the distinguished honour of a seat in the most illustrious assembly that the world has ever witnessed. In the various duties which devolved on him, he uniformly acted with prudence and precision, both as it regarded the great national questions which were discussed in the house, and the less distinguishing but not less necessary business of committees. In his employment in secret services, and particularly in his purchases of clothing for the army, in the importation of arms and ammunition, and in contracting for provisions, he displayed the peculiar qualifications which might be expected from his commercial abilities. As a member of the committee of claims, instituted for the purpose of putting the accounts of the continent in a proper train of liquidation and settlement, his professional knowledge was equally valuable and correct. From the same cause, he was an efficient member, in 1775, of the committee, on the Albany treaty with the six nations of Indians, appointed to mature a plan for re-opening the trade with those Indians at Albany and Schenectady, and to devise ways and means for procuring goods proper for that trade. On the eleventh of December, 1775, he was appointed one of a committee to devise some mode of furnishing the colonies with a naval armament, and was a valuable member of the committee of commerce. On the twentieth of September, 1776, he was delegated, together with Mr. Sherman and Mr. Gerry, to repair to head quarters, near New York, to inquire into the state of the army, and to devise the best means of supplying its wants. But it is impossible to enumerate the varied and valuable duties performed by Mr. Lewis, during the period of his services in congress. On the seventh of December, 1779, not long after his retirement from that body, he was appointed a commissioner for the board of admiralty, which office he accepted.

At the time of his first election to congress in 1775, Mr-

Lewis unfortunately removed his family and effects to his country seat on Long Island, which was plundered, in the fall of 1776, by the British light horse, under the command of colonel Birtch. All his immoveable property was wantonly destroyed, as well as his books and papers of every description. But the wrath of the marauders against the rebel representative, who had dared to brave the fury of offended royalty, by inscribing his name on the document which severed the British empire, was not appeased by the ruin in which they involved all his destructible property. The vengeance of party spirit was basely and inhumanly visited on an unprotected and unoffending female, and the undaunted patriotism of the statesman was revenged in the person of his wife. Mrs. Lewis, with inconceivable brutality, was placed in close confinement, without a bed to lie upon, and without any change of clothes whatever ; in which situation she remained during several months. This disgraceful affair was brought before congress on the eighth of November, 1776, and then referred to the board of war : on the third of December following, it was resolved that a " Mrs. Chamier be permitted to go to her husband at New York, and that Mrs. Lewis at Flushing, on Long Island, be required in exchange." It appears, however, that this unfortunate victim was finally exchanged through the influence of general Washington, for Mrs. Barrow, the wife of the British paymaster general, and Mrs. Kempe, the wife of the attorney general of the province. The consequence of her imprisonment was the entire loss of health ; and in the course of two years, her life fell a sacrifice to this modern act of vandalism. In fact, the conduct of the British was, in many respects, inhuman and disgraceful, particularly in the treatment of prisoners at New York. The wanton and oppressive devastation of the country, and the destruction of property ; the brutal treatment of those who fell into their power ; the savage butchery of others who had submitted and

were incapable of resistance ; and the lust and brutality of the soldiers in the abuse of women ; have all inflicted a stain upon the British character and British arms, which all the glory of her Marlboroughs, her Nelsons, and her Wellingtons, can never efface ; and the deep wound which pierced the bosom of America, still rankles and festers from generation to generation. From the report of a committee of congress, in April. 1777, it appears that the whole track of the British army through New Jersey was marked with the most wanton ravages and desolation, and that places of worship, ministers, and religious persons of certain protestant denominations, were particularly treated with the most rancorous hatred, and at the same time with the greatest contempt. Prisoners, instead of that humane treatment which those taken by the United States experienced, were in general treated with the greatest barbarity. Many of them were kept nearly four days absolutely without food ; and when they received a supply, it was both insufficient in point of quantity, and of the worst quality. They suffered the utmost distress from cold, nakedness, and close confinement. Freemen, and men of substance, suffered all that a generous mind could suffer, from the contempt and mockery of British and foreign mercenaries. Multitudes died in prison ; nor was any charitable assistance afforded to the sick and dying, a neglect which was probably never known to happen, in a similar case, among christians. The prisoners captured by sir William Howe, in 1776, amounted to many hundreds, who were shut up, in the coldest season of the year, in churches, sugar-houses, and other large buildings. Many hundreds of these unhappy men expired from the severity of the weather and the rigour of their treatment. The filth of their places of confinement was both offensive and dangerous ; and seven dead bodies have been seen in one building, at one time, all lying in a situation shocking to humanity. When those who survived were ordered to be sent out for

exchange, some of them fell dead in the streets, while attempting to walk to the vessels, and others were so emaciated that their appearance was horrible. It has been asserted, on as good evidence as the case will admit, that, during the last six years of the war, more than eleven thousand persons died on board the Jersey prison-ship, which was stationed in East river, near New York ; and for some time after the war the bones of many of these victims lay whitening in the sun on the shores of Long Island. Conyngham, the provost-marshal at New York, was a fellow who would not, says Graydon, have disgraced the imperial throne of the Cæsars, in the darkest days of Roman tyranny ; nor the republic of France at the most refulgent era of jacobinism. It is recorded, as a trait of his villany, that in the evening he would traverse his domain with a whip in his hand, sending his prisoners to bed with the ruffian-like exclamation of “ kennel, ye sons of b—s ! kennel G—d d—n ye !” Colonel Ethan Allen, than whom few have ever felt more severely the hand of arbitrary power, declares that Joshua Loring, the commissary of prisoners, was even a greater villain than Conyngham. His language on this occasion, so violent, yet characteristic of that singular man, demonstrates the irresistible excitement occasioned by a series of the most inhuman oppressions, and which once caused him to twist off with his teeth the nail which fastened the bar of his hand-cuffs : “ Loring,” he remarks, “ is the most mean-spirited, cowardly, deceitful, and destructive animal in God’s creation below ; and legions of infernal devils, with all their tremendous horrors, are impatiently ready to receive Howe and him, with all their detestable accomplices, into the most exquisite agonies of the hottest regions of hell-fire.”

With regard to the butchery of unresisting prisoners, many facts might be produced. It was the general opinion that the enemy, the day before the battle of Princeton, had determined to give no quarter ; and the treatment of several par-

ticular persons, at different times, was of the most shocking description, and gave too much countenance to the supposition. Wounded and disabled officers, some of whom were of the first rank, were barbarously mangled, or put to death. A minister of the gospel in Trenton, who neither was nor had been in arms, was massacred in cold blood, though humbly supplicating for mercy. A young American was killed by the British cavalry, and his body so cruelly hacked and mangled by their sabres, that general Washington thought proper to send it in for inspection : it was carried to the post of sir George Osborne, who with much admired sang-froid, simply returned for answer, that "*he was no coroner.*" This circumstance became a theme of considerable merriment, and the bon mot of sir George was not a little applauded. Such was the treatment of prisoners, and the inhumanity of the enemy, when Mrs. Lewis was subjected to the unmanly exercise of their power.

The property of Mr. Lewis was almost all sacrificed on the altar of patriotism ; and the peace which established the independence of his country, found him reduced from affluence to nearly a state of poverty ; his real estate being little more than sufficient for the discharge of his British debts.

On the thirtieth day of December, 1803, this venerable man, and excellent citizen, was gathered to his fathers, in the ninetyeth year of his age, bequeathing to his posterity a name which shall long flourish in the annals of liberty, and affording an example of virtue, constancy, and personal sacrifice, which, if properly appreciated, will serve as a model upon which the rising patriot may found his fame, and to which the veteran statesman may look with mingled emotions of rivalry and admiration.

LEWIS MORRIS.

THE family of Morris was greatly distinguished, through several generations, in the province of New York. Its members were conspicuous in the public affairs of that colony, by high station and popular influence as well as extensive possessions and illustrious descent.

The pride of ancestry, whether a virtue or a vanity, is now almost extinct in America. Few persons in this great nation cultivate genealogical information, or feel more than a slight curiosity respecting their progenitors. It has happened, however, to this family, to retain a complete history of its pedigree, by which a descent is authentically traced to ancestors of great celebrity, in ancient times.

The name of *Morris*, now not uncommon, was, it seems, a corruption, through the intermediate *Morrice*, which the Germans translated into *Mauritius*, from *Maur-Rhys*, a Welsh appellation for Rhys, or Rhice, Fitzgerald, who was a Cambrian chieftain, and a successful invader of Ireland, in the reign of Henry the second. The king having recalled Rhice from his conquests, and appropriated them to himself, gave him in compensation a large domain in Wales, where the family flourished for many generations, having dropped the name of Fitzgerald, and adopted that of Maur (or great) Rhice.

In the seventeenth century the descendants of the great *Rhys* were still considerable people in Monmouthshire, and were called Maurice or sometimes Morrice. Some of them took part in the civil wars, and one, Richard Morris, was a leader of distinction in the armies of Cromwell.

Being dissatisfied with the posture of affairs, about the time of the restoration, he went to Barbadoes, and soon after transferring himself to New York, he purchased a large estate near Haerlem, in West Chester county, within a few miles of the city, and obtained a grant from governor Fletcher, which erected his domain, of more than three thousand acres, into a manor, under the name of Morrisania, and furnished with all the customary manorial privileges.

He died in the year 1673, leaving an only child called Lewis—an infant at that time—who became afterwards chief justice of the province of New York, and governor of New Jersey, and possessed great influence and distinguished consideration in both those colonies.

In the next generation, the sons of Lewis held the elevated stations of judge of the court of vice admiralty, chief justice of New Jersey, and lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania. One of these, Lewis Morris, the judge, was the father of the patriot whose life and character it is now proposed to delineate.

LEWIS MORRIS, the subject of this memoir, was born at Morrisania in the year 1726, and was the eldest of three brothers, of whom one, Staats, was a general officer in the British service, and member of parliament. Richard was judge of vice admiralty, and chief justice of the state of New York, and Gouverneur was a distinguished orator and member of congress.

Lewis received the education usually given at that period to

the sons of gentlemen, but with only the limited advantages which a residence in the country afforded.

At the age of sixteen he was sent to Yale College, where, under the care of the learned and pious Dr. Clap, he was taught the learned languages and mathematics; and his youthful mind was imbued with the lessons of morality and religion.

He was graduated as Bachelor of Arts, at the public commencement in 1746, and returning immediately to his paternal acres, he devoted himself assiduously to the theory and practice of agriculture.

This particular period has been called the golden age of the colonies. Certainly a remarkable degree of tranquillity and plenty, of peace and prosperity, was then enjoyed. The yoke of government sat lightly; the power of internal legislation was exercised with little restraint, by the colonial legislatures; the authority of the crown was scarcely felt or seen, and the means of comfortable subsistence were within the easy attainment of all men.

At this happy æra Lewis Morris passed from youth to manhood;—he was one to whom both for his illustrious descent and connexions, and for his large possessions, the eyes of the whole province of New York were turned; and he was, according to the tradition that reaches us, richly endowed with all the most prepossessing and attractive graces of person and deportment.

Such attributes become the scorn of advanced years, but they are the glory of youth—it may, therefore, be worth recording, that Lewis Morris possessed a lofty stature, a singularly handsome face, and the most graceful demeanor, with a temperament so enthusiastic and ardent, and a disposition so benevolent and generous, as to render him in his native province the universal favourite of his coevals.

The town, however, with all its attractions of society and pleasure, could not draw him away, except occasionally, from the care of his estate at Morrisania, where he became a farmer on a very large scale of agricultural operations, which he carried on with spirit and success.

He was early in life blessed in a very happy matrimonial connexion with Miss Mary Walton, a young lady of large fortune and amiable character, who became the mother of six sons and four daughters.

Mr. Morris was of a cheerful as well as a sanguine temper, seldom allowing external circumstances, however vexatious in their nature, to depress his spirits; he was also a zealous friend, and fortunate in his friendships, no one of which he had ever reason to repent of or withdraw.

Such was the peaceful and prosperous condition of his life when the troubles of his country began. Of his brothers, one was high in military rank in the service of the king, and married to the duchess of Gordon, and another successful in his profession, and judge of the vice admiralty court.

Possessing an extensive estate in the immediate vicinity of the city, surrounded by a numerous offspring, and a large circle of friends, in the interesting pursuits of agriculture, the education of his children, and the exercise of liberal and elegant hospitality, he found ample and delightful occupation. The disputes between the colonies and royal government promised no improvement to his means of happiness, but brought, in effect, a blight upon his felicity which nothing could compensate but the consciousness of deserving the gratitude of his country and of posterity.

The act of parliament, usually called the stamp act, elicited no where more emphatic denunciations than at New York; where it was lamented as a calamity and upbraided as an oppression, in every form of public and private expression.

The newspapers were decorated with black borders and awful emblems of death—the publication of them suspended—letters, speeches, resolves of public meetings—all the indications of a universal and sincere sense of wrong and injury abounded. In all this Mr. Morris bore his part. He was a private individual, and not disposed to put himself unnecessarily forward; and as nothing more than complaint was at this time in contemplation, he very willingly allowed others to take the lead in the outcry, reserving his energies for the time of action. The early repeal of the obnoxious act allayed the ferment, and contentment again prevailed for a short period.

In the year 1767, the province of New York was put to a severe trial of her spirit and firmness by the act requiring additional supplies to be given to the king's troops. This imposition was very partial in its operation, only those places where parts of the royal army were quartered being subjected to its influence. Upon New York it operated with particular severity and inconvenience, and was an invasion of the right of property almost as gross as that which had been attempted in the stamp act.

On the subject of this law, and on the question of submitting to it, Mr. Morris was decided and unreserved. He did not hesitate to pronounce it unconstitutional, tyrannical, and not to be submissively borne; and he joined in promoting the spirit which induced the colonial legislature to refuse their compliance.

This was a bold, perhaps a rash measure, for the single unsupported colony of New York. The aggression had not been made the subject of consultation among the colonies, and New York alone could not reasonably hope to resist the power of Great Britain. The fearless spirit then exhibited, however, though prematurely and fruitlessly shown, was highly honourable to the people of that colony, and makes

amends in history, for the supineness with which New York was subsequently charged.

The result of so unequal a contest was such as might have been foreseen. After a few months of contumacy the province found itself obliged to submit, the royal troops were supplied with the salt, vinegar, beer and cider called for by the military requisition ; and a sullen silence on the part of the inhabitants was supposed by the British government to be a proof of satisfaction.

At this time, the colony most seriously embroiled with the royal authority was Massachusetts Bay ; but the others were by no means unconcerned spectators ; and when, at length, the severe measures were successively adopted, of the revival of the statute of Henry the eighth, for sending persons charged with treason to England for trial ; the closing of the port of Boston ; and the bill authorizing the king's officers to send to England any person in Massachusetts accused of any offence ; these tyrannical and cruel impositions were felt by the whole as aggressions on each, and by general consent the memorable congress of 1774 was assembled.

The business of this meeting of delegates was not to prepare for war, but by pacific consultation and explanations, to produce a restoration of tranquillity and good understanding. The fervent loyalty which breathes in their eloquent addresses to the king, the British people, and their fellow subjects in the colonies, and the entire absence of all hints of resistance, show the purposes for which they considered themselves brought together.

There could not have been a fairer experiment made of the efficacy of humble petitions to the royal government, and of affectionate appeals to the people of England. And no experiment, begun with such rational prospect of at least partial success, could have terminated in a more total failure.

Mr. Lewis Morris was not a member of this congress. He was too decided and zealous an assertor of the rights of the colonies, and too bold a declaimer against the arbitrary acts of the ministry. The object at this time was peace, to be secured by compromise; and too rigid an adherence to the rights of the colonists, or too warm an expression of the sentiments which the conduct of the government could not fail to excite, might mar the scheme of pacification.

The entire indifference with which the representations of this congress were received in England, and the manifestations of a determined perseverance on the part of the ministry, convinced the greater part of the colonists that something more vigorous must be done than the issuing of humble memorials.

The choice of delegates to the congress of the succeeding year, was governed in a considerable degree by different principles, and men of less timid disposition, and more enthusiastic spirit, were in many cases substituted for more cautious and more loyal predecessors.

The bloody skirmish, sometimes called the battle, at Lexington, had occurred just in time to infuse fresh ardour into the hearts of the New York convention of deputies, which on the twenty-second of April, 1775, assembled for the purpose of choosing delegates to the general congress; and under the influence of this feeling they chose Mr. Morris as one of them; an appointment which he proceeded to fulfil, on the fifteenth of May, when he took his seat.

In the proceedings of the previous congress, the olive branch alone was discernible—humility, loyalty, patient suffering was the only boast; now the tone appears somewhat changed, the sword is shown, undrawn, in one hand; the olive branch still held in the other; a devoted attachment to the king was still professed; but this sentiment was curiously blended with an acknowledgment that reconciliation was quite uncertain,

and with earnest recommendations to prepare for war. This mixture of affection and fidelity towards the king, with bitter complaints against his ministers, accompanied with a stern resolution to defend the rights of the colonies, is strikingly exemplified in the resolutions adopted very early in the session; to wit—

“That his majesty’s most faithful subjects in these colonies are reduced to a dangerous and critical situation, by the attempts of the British ministry to carry into execution, by force of arms, several unconstitutional and oppressive acts of the British parliament for laying taxes in America; to enforce the collection of those taxes, and for altering and changing the constitution and internal police of some of these colonies, in violation of the natural and civil rights of the colonists.

“Hostilities being actually commenced in the Massachusetts Bay, by the British troops under the command of general Gage, and the lives of a number of the inhabitants of that colony destroyed, the town of Boston having not only been long occupied as a garrisoned town in an enemy’s country, but the inhabitants thereof treated with a severity and cruelty not to be justified even towards declared enemies; large reinforcements too being ordered and soon expected, for the declared purpose of compelling these colonies to submit to the operation of the said acts; that therefore, for the express purpose of securing and defending these colonies, and preserving them in safety against all attempts to carry the said acts into execution by force of arms, these colonies be immediately put into a state of defence.

“But, as we most ardently wish for a restoration of the harmony formerly subsisting between our mother country and these colonies, the interruption of which must, at all events, be exceedingly injurious to both countries, that with a sincere design of contributing by all the means in our

power, not incompatible with a just regard for the undoubted rights and true interests of these colonies, to the promotion of this most desirable reconciliation, an humble and dutiful petition be presented to his majesty.

“That measures be entered into for opening a negotiation, in order to accommodate the unhappy disputes subsisting between Great Britain and these colonies, and that this be made a part of the petition to the king.

“That the militia of New York be armed and trained, and in constant readiness to act at a moment’s warning; and that a number of men be immediately embodied and kept in that city, and so disposed of as to give protection to the inhabitants, in case any insult should be offered by the troops that may land there, and to prevent any attempts that may be made to gain possession of the city, and interrupt its intercourse with the country.

“That it be recommended to the provincial convention at New York, to persevere the more vigorously in preparing for their defence, as it is very uncertain whether the earnest endeavours of the congress, to accommodate the unhappy differences between Great Britain and the colonies, by conciliatory measures, will be successful.”

Soon after these first hints of war, Mr. Morris was placed on a committee, of which Washington was the chairman, to consider on ways and means to supply the colonies with ammunition and military stores. The labours of this committee were as embarrassing as any that could be imagined: the condition of the colonies as to the possession of the implements of war was nearly that of absolute destitution; and the choice was difficult between the expediency of keeping the degree of their poverty, in that respect, a secret, and the urgent necessity of an appeal to the patriotism of the country at large for the means of a supply.

The battle of Bunker's Hill, which occurred in the ensuing month, left no argument for half-way measures unrefuted; and the appointment of Washington to the command of the army at the same time, was a decisive indication of the course which the congress had determined to adopt.

Mr. Morris continued during the residue of this session faithfully performing his duties on the floor and in committee; but before the commencement of the next, he went to the western country for the purpose of assisting in the difficult operation of detaching the Indians from the interests of the British government, and inducing them to join their force to that of the colonists.

He continued at Pittsburg and the vicinity until the winter, and was in constant correspondence with the congress on the subject of Indian affairs.

He was also employed in public service, out of congress, in the endeavour to persuade the several assemblies of the New England states to procure a supply of arms. And after he resumed his seat in the beginning of the year 1776, he was engaged as a member of the committees to contract for the purchase of muskets and bayonets, and to consider the ways and means of encouraging the manufacture of saltpetre and gunpowder; also on the standing committee for Indian affairs, and several of a temporary and less important character.

It is well known that great reserve was practised at this period, respecting the design of establishing a government independent of Great Britain; and the public addresses and resolutions, however bitter against the ministry, generally contained a salvo of respect towards the king.

Early in the winter of 1775-6, a member moved a resolution, signifying, that inasmuch as some persons erroneously or maliciously ascribed to congress the design of declaring

independence ; therefore it was proper to make a public disavowal of any such unjustifiable intentions. This was an awkward subject for the congress to manage: they were not yet prepared to declare the colonies independent, and yet a large proportion, if not nearly all, were most decidedly opposed to any pledge or assurance that such a measure would not be adopted. The proposal was smothered without taking any vote upon it; and in order to prepare the minds of the people, without shock or surprise, for the important event already anticipated by most of those whose situation enabled them to look forward, a manifesto was prepared, in the composition of which, we have the authority of a contemporary for saying, Mr. Morris took an active part. This paper was drawn up with considerable art; and though well calculated to excite the spirit of the whigs, could not be taken as offensive by the tories.

In most of the colonies the progress was slow, and through much hesitation. to an open and decided wish for independence; and no where did the unwillingness to part with all connexion with Great Britain more gradually disappear than in New York.

Lewis Morris was, very early, a determined advocate of independence; but the people in general of this province, and particularly of the city, did not agree with him in this sentiment.

The intercourse had been particularly close and intimate between those people and the officers of the royal government. A considerable number of troops had usually been stationed at New York, and the officers had rendered themselves acceptable guests to the inhabitants, by adding greatly to the cheerfulness and bustle of the place; besides forming intimacies, and in some instances, connexions, with the families of the citizens.

Even subsequent to the commencement of hostilities, this intercourse had continued with only a partial interruption.— And so late as the middle of March, 1776, governor Tryon, although he had been obliged to betake himself to one of the British armed vessels in the harbour, still was enabled to disseminate his insinuating addresses throughout the city and colony, and by means of them to retain great influence over the public mind.

In one of those addresses, he told them, that “notwithstanding prejudice, delusion, and faction had, among too many, usurped the seat of reason and reflection, and every exhortation he had offered to the inhabitants of this province, in whose affection he had been taught to be happy, had been reviled and treated with neglect, yet as his wishes for their prosperity, and feelings for their calamities, cannot easily be suppressed even towards the disobedient, he cannot but repeat his endeavours to recal those who had revolted from their allegiance to a sense of their duty, and to comfort those who have been the objects of oppression, for their zealous attachment to our happy constitution, and their steady obedience to the sovereignty of the British empire.”

“It is in the clemency and authority of Great Britain only,” he continued, “that we can look for happiness, peace and protection, and I have it in command from the king to encourage, by every means in my power, the expectations in his majesty’s well disposed subjects in this government of every assistance and protection the state of Great Britain will enable his majesty to afford them, and to crush every appearance of a disposition on their part to withstand the tyranny and misrule which accompany the acts of those who have but too well hitherto succeeded in the total subversion of legal government. Under such assurances, therefore, I exhort all the friends to good order, and our justly admired constitution,

still to preserve that constancy of mind, which is inherent in the breasts of virtuous and loyal citizens, and I trust a very few months will relieve them from their present oppressed, injured, and insulted condition.

“ England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, have united to place their whole strength, power, and confidence in his majesty’s hands. The numerous addresses, from all parts of the king’s dominions in Europe. speak the loyalty and zeal with which his subjects there engage to support his majesty in asserting and maintaining the just sovereignty of the British empire over all its members.

“ The British state moves not but by sudden and violent sallies, nor wantonly oppresses ; she has lenity for her basis, and is distinguished for moderation and forbearance ; but when her just indignation is roused, the experience of other nations can testify her weight and force. It cannot be sufficiently lamented, that the conduct of this country has called for so severe a rod ; may a timely and dutiful submission avert its stroke.

“ I have the satisfaction to inform you that a door is still open to such honest, but deluded people, as will avail themselves of the justice and benevolence, which the supreme legislature has held out to them of being restored to the king’s grace and peace, and that proper steps have been taken for passing a commission for that purpose, under the great seal of Great Britain, in conformity to a provision in a late act of parliament, the commissioners thereby to be appointed having also power to inquire into the state and condition of the colonies for effecting a restoration of the public tranquillity.”

It was by the instrumentality of blandishments like this, the people of New York, at least a very large number of them, were kept from so hearty a co-operation in the great struggle as they would otherwise have given.

Lewis Morris, with other patriotic gentlemen, exerted themselves zealously and industriously in the effort to raise a better feeling, and to discourage and prevent all communication with the fleet. By the influence thus employed, the 'committee of safety' were induced, on the eighteenth of April, to prohibit, under pain of the severest penalties, any intercourse, direct or indirect, personal or in writing, with the royal ships. This ordinance, however, was not very rigidly obeyed or enforced; and when general Washington came to establish head-quarters at New York, he found that governor Tryon was a more formidable adversary, by the use of letters, proclamations, and conciliatory addresses, than general Gage had been, with all his well appointed army. The commander in chief was, therefore, impelled to add the authority of a proclamation from himself, threatening the punishment of treason upon all such as should be found violating the regulation in this respect.

"Whereas," said his excellency, "an intercourse and correspondence with the ships of war, and other vessels belonging to and in the service of the king of Great Britain, is highly detrimental to the rights and liberties of the said colonies"—"and there is reason to believe that sundry base and wicked persons, preferring their own present private emolument to their country's weal, have continued to carry on the same, particularly some who under pretence of coming to the market of this city by water, have put themselves, their vessels and effects in the way of the said ships of war, for the purpose of giving intelligence and furnishing them with supplies of provision, and have been taken: To the end that such evil and pernicious practices may be remedied and prevented in future, I hereby publish and declare, that if any person or persons shall hereafter presume to have, hold, or continue to carry on such intercourse, or any kind of corre-

spondence whatsoever, or furnish and supply the said ships of war, and other vessels in such service, with provisions and necessaries of any kind, that he or they, so offending, will be deemed and considered as an enemy or enemies to the rights of the said colonies, and if apprehended will be treated accordingly.

“And I do hereby will and require all officers and soldiers in the army under my command, and most earnestly entreat all persons well attached to the interest of the said colonies, to use their utmost care and diligence for preventing the same, and apprehending and securing all persons who shall be guilty thereof.”

It is believed that the reluctance to break off all communication with the officers of the royal government, was not confined to such persons as this proclamation particularly points out. The provincial congress were by no means prepared for decisive measures. That this backwardness existed, and was fairly imputed to that body, is in part established by the cold and discouraging reply which was given to a very well meant, though awkward proposal, made at about this time by a committee of mechanics of the city of New York.

The address is characterized by a strange departure from the simple, pathetic and nervous eloquence which marks almost all the public papers of this period ; but is indicative of a spirit that deserved a more encouraging reception than it seems to have received. It was entitled “The humble address of the general committee of mechanics in union, of the city and county of New York, in behalf of themselves and their constituents,” and was thus expressed : “We, as a part of your constituents, and devoted friends to our bleeding country, beg leave in a dutiful manner at this time to approach unto you, our representatives, and request your kind attention to this our humble address.

“When we cast a glance upon our beloved continent, where fair freedom, civil and religious, we have long enjoyed, whose fruitful fields have made the world glad, and whose trade has filled with plenty of all things, sorrow fills our hearts to behold her now struggling under the heavy load of oppression, tyranny and death; but when we extend our sight a little farther, and view the iron hand that is lifted up against us, behold it is our king, he who by his oath and station is bound to support and defend us in the quiet enjoyment of all our glorious rights as freemen, and whose dominions have been supported and made rich by our commerce, shall we any longer sit silent, and contentedly continue the subjects of such a prince, who is deaf to our petitions for interposing his royal authority in our behalf, and for redressing our grievances, but, on the contrary, seems to take pleasure in our destruction. When we see that one whole year is not enough to satisfy the rage of a cruel ministry, in burning our towns, seizing our vessels, and murdering our precious sons of liberty; making weeping widows for the loss of those who were dearer to them than life, and helpless orphans to bemoan the death of an affectionate father; but who are still carrying on the same bloody pursuit, and for no other reason than this, that we will not become their slaves, and be taxed by them without our consent.

“Therefore, as we would rather choose to separate from, than to continue any longer in connexion with such oppressors, we, the committee of mechanics in union, do, for ourselves and our constituents, hereby publicly declare, that should you, gentlemen of our honourable provincial congress, think proper to instruct our most honourable delegates in continental congress, to use their utmost endeavours in that august assembly to cause these united colonies to become independent of Great Britain, it would give us the highest satisfaction,



and we hereby sincerely promise to endeavour to support the same with our lives and fortunes."

To this address the provincial congress, on the fourth of June, returned a very cold and reserved reply, instead of taking advantage of the occasion, as they might have done, to express their approbation of the intended declaration of independence, as to which nearly all the colonies, except Pennsylvania and Maryland, had already signified their concurrence and pledged their support.

"We consider," says the answer of the provincial congress, "the mechanics in union as a voluntary association of a number of the inhabitants of this city, who are warmly attached to the cause of liberty. We flatter ourselves, however, that neither that association, nor their committee, claim any authority whatsoever in the public transactions of the present times; but that, on the contrary, they will ever be ready to submit to that constitutional authority, which, by a free election, has been vested in congress and committees. This congress is at all times ready and willing to attend to every request of their constituents, or of any part of them. We are of opinion, that the continental congress alone have that enlarged view of our political circumstances, which will enable them to decide upon those measures which are necessary for the general welfare. We therefore cannot presume to instruct the delegates of this colony on the momentous question to which your address refers, until we are informed that it is brought before the continental congress, and the sense of this colony be required through this congress."

In addition to this evidence of excessive prudence on the part of the provincial congress, the newspapers of the period contain letters stating that independence had few advocates in that assembly. The cannon of general Howe, nevertheless,

soon after proved a sufficient antidote to the poison of governor Tryon's pernicious sophistry.

The "ministerial" fleet, as it was called even then by many persons who were quite ready to oppose it as such, but not yet reconciled to the idea of open hostility against the king, arrived at Sandy Hook while congress were debating the proposition introduced by Mr. Lee to issue a declaration of independence.

The danger that impended over New York, the prospect of such a scene of destruction as Falmouth and some other towns had already exhibited, or even the anticipation of a dilapidation like that which Boston had suffered from the occupation of the royal army, might have supplied a fair excuse for Mr. Morris, if he had desired to impede the adoption of the resolution, or had chosen to evade responsibility by absenting himself from the hall of congress. But, if he had an estate to be devastated and destroyed by the British troops, he had also a character for consistency to preserve, which he valued much more highly; and he had also a sincere, high minded love of liberty and justice, which would not permit him to hesitate, if pride of reputation had been out of the question, between the safety of his individual property and the honour of his country.

In voting for the declaration of independence, and putting his name to the instrument, at the very time when a large British army had landed within a few miles of his estate, and their armed ships were lying within cannon shot of the dwelling of his family, he felt and knew that he was devoting his fine farm and mansion, and valuable timber, to the special vengeance of the British commanders, and therefore to the unrestrained devastations of the soldiery; but he had higher aims than the preservation of his own property; motives of action in which self interest formed no part.

Although the colony of New York had been backward in agreeing to the proposed attempt to establish a government independent of the mother country, yet finding such a step had been taken with the concurrence of nearly all the other colonies, the people of this one immediately pronounced their acquiescence and pledged their support. The convention assembled at White Plains, resolved unanimously, on the ninth day of July, that "the reasons assigned by the continental congress for declaring the united colonies independent states, were cogent and conclusive, and that while they lamented the cruel necessity which rendered that measure unavoidable, they approved of the same, and would at the risk of their lives and fortunes join with the other colonies in supporting it."

The delegates from that colony, who had ventured, in anticipation of this sanction, to vote for the declaration, had thus the gratification to learn that their conduct was not disapproved at home.

The operations of the hostile armies, very shortly afterwards placed Morrisania, as had been expected, in the power of the enemy ; who did not spare the property of one that had just been affixing his name to a public renunciation and defiance of the king's authority.

His fine woodland of more than a thousand acres, all upon navigable water, and within a few miles of the capital—of a value not easily measured, but evidently worth an immense price—was totally laid bare and given up to plunder and conflagration. His house, from which his family were obliged to retreat, was spoiled and injured ; his fences burnt or prostrated ; his stock driven off ; his domestics and tenants dispersed ; and his whole estate laid waste and ruined, as much as was within the power and opportunity of the British forces.

During the interval between this period and the evacuation of New York in the autumn of 1783, Mr. Morris and his family suffered great inconvenience from being thus cut off from their residence and their means of support. He was obliged in consequence to make many sacrifices, which caused him to return to the possession of his estates, impoverished far beyond the mere loss of his woods, his stock, and his fences.

The spirit with which he had met the difficulties of the contest, and which sustained him under the pressure of these misfortunes, was shared equally by his family, who did not regret the loss of their comforts or the enjoyments to be purchased by wealth, knowing for what cause their father subjected them to such privations.

His three eldest sons had taken up arms, and exerted themselves as faithfully for their country, in the field, as their father did in council.

Of these the eldest, Lewis, commenced his military career as aid-de-camp to general Sullivan, with the rank of major. He served in that arduous campaign which terminated in the defeat of the Indians, and their expulsion from the northern and western parts of the state of New York. He afterwards accepted general Greene's invitation to enter his family, and distinguished himself in all the brilliant campaigns of that most active and enterprising commander, in the Carolinas. When the persevering valour of the forces under general Greene's command had finally delivered that portion of the union from the horrors of a protracted war, major Morris received the thanks of congress and the commission of colonel, as a testimonial of their exalted sense of his services.

The second son, Jacob, had been educated for a merchant, at Philadelphia, but impelled by the same patriotic ardour,

he offered his services to congress, and was appointed aid-de-camp to general Charles Lee, with whom he went to the south, and had an opportunity to prove his bravery at the gallant defence of Fort Moultrie, and in many subsequent actions.

The third, whose name was William, was very young, but being tall enough for a soldier, he entered the corps of artillery as a lieutenant, and served with reputation to the close of the war.

Mr. Morris relinquished his seat in congress to his half-brother, Gouverneur, who was elected in his stead early in the year 1777, on which occasion the convention passed a resolution of thanks to him and his colleagues, "for their long and faithful services rendered to the colony of New York and the said state."

After this time, New York being in a greater or less degree the seat of war, he remained within the state, serving as a member of the legislature and an officer of the militia. In the legislature his high character, undaunted spirit and untiring zeal, were of the most important value to the cause of independence, which still, for some years of difficulty and bloodshed, was suspended in doubtful prospect. As an officer of the militia he rose to the rank of a major general, and contributed essentially to the effective organization and equipment of the militia of New York.

He lived to see peace restored to his country, her independence acknowledged, and her prosperity placed on the firmest basis, and secured by the wisest political constitution that has ever yet been framed.

The latter part of his life was passed at Morrisania, the elegant seat of his ancestors, where turning his sword again into a scythe, he resumed the practice of agriculture, and in

the delightful retirement of his farm he met the advances of old age with serenity and happiness. Of his numerous offspring one only, the eldest son, preceded him to the tomb, the rest he had the satisfaction to see respectably settled in life and supporting the high character of the family.

He died in January, 1798, in the seventy-second year of his age, and his remains were interred, with military and civic honours, in the family vault at Morrisania.

RICHARD STOCKTON.

THE Declaration of Independence was signed on behalf of the state of New Jersey by five delegates, RICHARD STOCKTON, JOHN WITHERSPOON, FRANCIS HOPKINSON, JOHN HART, and ABRAHAM CLARK.

The first of these, **RICHARD STOCKTON**, is the subject of the present memoir. His great-grandfather, bearing the same name, emigrated from England previous to the year 1670, and resided a few years on Long Island, near the city of New York. He belonged, it is said, to an ancient and highly respectable family, and possessed an opulent fortune. About the year 1680, he purchased an extensive tract, or patent, of land, consisting of sixty-four hundred acres, of which the present borough of Princeton is nearly the centre : it extended from the province line of division between East and West Jersey, situated about two miles south of Princeton, to the river Millstone, near the village of Kingston, three miles to the north.

In the year 1682 or 1683, he, with a number of associates, formed a settlement upon this tract, and they were the first white or European settlers in that district. He resided there about twenty-three years, and died at an advanced age in 1705, leaving several children. A large portion of his landed

estate devolved upon his son, Richard, who died at the same place in the year 1720. His surviving issue of both sexes was numerous, but he devised his family seat to his youngest son John, the father of him whose services, talents, and merit, it is the particular purpose of this sketch to commemorate.

John Stockton was a man of great respectability, and resided on his estate as an independent country gentleman, in the full enjoyment of affluence and domestic tranquillity. Possessed of a strictly moral and religious character, he was the enemy of vice and the friend of virtue. As the patron of science, he was a liberal friend to the college of New Jersey, which was established in the vicinity of his estate during the latter part of his life. He presided as chief judge of the court of common pleas in the county of Somerset for many years previous to his death, which occurred in the year 1757.

RICHARD STOCKTON, whose name is affixed to the Declaration of Independence, was the eldest son of John Stockton. He was born at the ancient family seat of his forefathers, near

30) Princeton, in the county of Somerset, on the first day of October, A. D. 1730. He received all the advantages which a finished education could confer upon a powerful and comprehensive mind. His instruction in the rudiments of classical science was, in early youth, confined to that profound scholar, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Finley, under whose tuition he resided at an academy in West Nottingham, in the then province of Maryland. This seminary was at that period the most celebrated and flourishing in the colonies to the south of New England. Having remained in that situation about two years, he was sent to the college of New Jersey at Newark, where he diligently pursued his studies for several years, and received the honours of the first annual commencement at Nassau Hall, A. D. 1748, which was then celebrated at that ancient town under the auspices of the eminent and learned

divine, president Burr. At this early age he indicated that intellectual superiority which, ripened by experience, was so brilliantly evolved in the course of his public and professional career.

Soon after he was graduated, he applied himself to the study of the law, under the direction of the honourable David Ogden, of Newark, at that time the most eminent lawyer in the province. He was admitted to the bar in the term of August, 1754, and to the grade of counsellor in 1758, when he immediately established himself at his paternal seat, and rose with remarkable rapidity to the first rank in the forum. He stood, in fact, for many years and by universal consent, unrivalled at the bar, although a number of his professional contemporaries were men of learning and brilliant talents. His high and well-merited celebrity as an able and eloquent advocate, did not permit his professional services to be circumscribed within the limits of his native colony. He was frequently invited to conduct cases of importance in the neighbouring colony of Pennsylvania, where he acquired the friendship and esteem of Dickinson, Shippen, Chew, and other distinguished members of the bar. In 1763 he received the degree of serjeant at law.

Having acquired a very competent fortune, he relaxed from the toils of professional business in the years 1766 and 1767, and visited England, Scotland, and Ireland. He embarked at New York in the month of June 1766, for London, where he safely arrived after a prosperous passage. The fame of his high character and distinguished abilities had preceded him, and he was received with flattering attention by the most eminent men of the kingdom. He was presented at the court of St. James's by one of the king's ministers, and had the honour of personally presenting to his majesty an address of the trustees of the college of New Jersey, signed by Edward

Shippen, then president of the board, acknowledging the condescension manifested by the king towards the colonies, in the repeal of the stamp act: this address was favourably received. The services rendered by Mr. Stockton to the college during his visit to Great Britain, were so numerous and various, that on his return to America he received the formal thanks of the board of trustees.

He was freely consulted on the state of American affairs by the marquis of Rockingham, whose hospitality he enjoyed during a week's residence at his country seat in Yorkshire, and, it is believed, by the earl of Chatham, and other distinguished members of parliament, who were friendly to the American colonies. He frankly communicated to these gentlemen his decided opinion against the policy which had originated the stamp act, then so prudently and happily repealed, and assured them of his firm conviction that the colonists would never submit to be taxed by the British parliament.

In the months of February and March, A. D. 1767, he visited the capital of North Britain, where he was received with flattering marks of friendship and respect by many eminent noblemen, gentlemen, and literati, of that part of the kingdom. He often adverted in a particular manner to the hospitality and politeness of the earl of Leven. This illustrious nobleman was the commander in chief of Edinburgh castle, and resided in that city. His princely hospitality towards strangers in general, and particularly respectable Americans, was very conspicuous, and he favoured Mr. Stockton with his peculiar confidence and friendship. So general, indeed, was the friendly disposition manifested towards him at Edinburgh, that soon after his arrival, he was visited in a formal manner by the lord provost and council of that city, who complimented him with a public dinner, at which an ad-

dress was delivered by the lord provost congratulating him on his safe arrival in the capital of the north. They unanimously conferred upon him the freedom of the city, as a testimony of the public sense of his conspicuous character and talents, which honour was acknowledged by Mr. Stockton in a suitable address delivered with that superior eloquence for which he was at all times so highly distinguished.

At this period he visited the ancient town of Paisley near Glasgow, where he was deputed by the trustees of the college of New Jersey to visit the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, who had been recently elected president of that institution. The reluctance, however, of the female branches of his family to emigrate to America, had induced him to decline the appointment, and Mr. Stockton was authorised to employ all his powers of persuasion in favour of the college, to procure the reversal of that decision. Happily his strong representations materially promoted the interests of the college, by removing many of those objections which had caused that eminent divine to reject the appointment. Upon reconsideration, he, a few months subsequent to the interview with Mr. Stockton, acceded to the nomination. The determination of Dr. Witherspoon was not only of material benefit to the college, but to the country at large. His profound learning and distinguished character imparted additional lustre and celebrity to the seat of learning over which he presided, and the cause of the colonists found a powerful support during the revolutionary contest, in the fervent patriotism, matured experience, and eminent wisdom, of that great statesman.

Mr. Stockton, in the progress of his tour through the united kingdom, arrived at Dublin in the month of October, 1766, where he was received in a manner becoming his rank in society and personal merit. During a short residence in Ireland, he was strongly impressed by the contrast existing be-

tween the natural luxuriance of that fine country, and the miserable and degraded state of the poorer classes of society, groaning under the exactions and oppressions of a foreign government. He admired and sympathised with the generous but distressed people of Ireland ; and the personal opportunities which he possessed of viewing the situation to which they had been reduced, is believed to have had a powerful influence over his mind, and to have increased the opposition which he afterwards manifested to an acquiescence in, or submission to, the plans of the British ministry, which endeavoured to introduce the evils of colonial subjection into his native land.

It may prove interesting to notice two incidents that occurred during his residence in Great Britain, by which his life was placed in imminent peril, and his country was nearly deprived of one of its firmest friends and most eloquent advocates. He was attacked at night in the city of Edinburgh by a desperate robber, and after a severe contest, in which he successfully and skilfully defended himself with a small sword, now in the possession of his youngest son, he repelled the attack without receiving any material injury ; but the robber, although wounded, succeeded in making his escape.

The manner in which his life was a second time preserved, made an indelible impression on his mind, and he frequently related the circumstance in language manifesting a high sensibility, and ardent gratitude to the protecting providence which had saved him from destruction. He had engaged his passage in a packet for the purpose of crossing the Irish channel, but his baggage being accidentally detained, did not arrive before the vessel had departed. Although he was seriously disappointed by this detention, it proved the cause of his preservation. The packet, in which he intended to embark, was shipwrecked in a violent storm, and every person

on board perished, including the British general Stanwise and his suite. Mr. Stockton, a few days after, passed the Irish channel in safety.

During his residence in London, he was a frequent attendant at Westminster hall, for the purpose of hearing the arguments of sir Fletcher Norton, John Dunning, Charles Yorke, Moreton, Eyre, Wallace, Blackstone, and other celebrated serjeants and lawyers, who were distinguished by their forensic eloquence and learning. His attention, at the same time, was directed to the decisions and opinions of Mansfield, Camden, Yates, Wilmot, Bathurst, and other great men, who, at that brilliant period of British history, dignified and adorned the judicial character of the kingdom. It is also believed that he enjoyed several opportunities of witnessing the overpowering eloquence of Chatham, the British Demosthenes, as well as the interesting and animated debates of Burke, Barré, and other celebrated orators of the British parliament.

At this period the eloquence of the drama was characterized by unusual splendour. Although inimical to an habitual indulgence in theatrical amusements, which was equally repugnant to his religious sentiments and feelings, and to the dignity and simplicity which became his station and his country, he did not deem it inconsistent with his duty to depart, in some degree, from his usual habits, and enrich his extensive fund of eloquence, by witnessing the sublime delineations and elevated genius of the inimitable Garrick. He frequently observed, that on several occasions, particularly in the ghost scene of Hamlet, the astonishing efforts of that extraordinary man caused him to experience a feeling similar to the rising of the hair described in the "*steteruntque comæ, et erectis auribus,*" in a well known passage of a celebrated writer of antiquity.

Engrafting the advantages derived from these various sources on the fertile stock of his native genius, and perfecting those acquirements in the elegant embellishments of classical science for which he was remarkable, his original eloquence became highly cultivated and improved.

He also became acquainted with the earl of Chesterfield, distinguished as a politician, but still more as a man whose polished and fascinating manners justly entitled him to the high character which he possessed as the most accomplished gentleman of his age. Mr. Stockton frequently reverted with pleasure to his agreeable and interesting interview with that nobleman. The first impression produced in his mind, at the moment of introduction, was that of an infirm old man, who had lost his teeth and his hearing, and whose person was neither pleasing nor prepossessing. But when he began to speak, these transient ideas instantly vanished : his eyes became brilliant, and his whole manner was so persuasive and enchanting, as to cause Mr. Stockton, in relating the circumstance, to observe, that no language could convey an adequate idea of the powerful effect which it produced. "I forgot," he continued, "that he was deaf and without teeth, and he appeared to me remarkably handsome."

Mr. Stockton was forcibly impressed with the general ignorance prevalent in Great Britain in relation to the American character and people, which was observable among all classes of society. Finding that those who, in other respects, possessed extensive information, were little more enlightened on this subject than the ignorant and uninstructed, he immediately foresaw, with his natural sagacity, the unpleasant consequences that would probably result from this universal want of knowledge. Hence he used every practicable exertion to dissipate the obscurity which rested upon that important topic. As the mass of the people materially misunderstood

and depreciated the character and feelings of the cisatlantic community, it was his earnest desire to remove these partial and illiberal impressions, by elevating the American character to that degree of just consideration, which, according to his opinion, it properly merited. Had the views and patriotic exertions of Mr. Stockton been more extensively propagated and supported, it is probable that a union might have been effected on principles consistent with the rights and interests of both countries. But the warnings and counsels of the best and wisest men in various parts of the empire were disregarded, and the nation was speedily precipitated into the calamities of a civil war, which, happily for America, terminated in the separation of the colonies from the mother country, and deprived the British king of what has been justly termed the fairest jewel in his crown.

Mr. Stockton had now been more than a year absent from home, during which period his professional business had been principally conducted by his friends, and more particularly by his brother-in-law, the late Elias Boudinot. Under these circumstances he became anxious to return to America, and his solicitude was greatly increased by the knowledge that his arrival was earnestly anticipated by his family and friends. Neither the amusements of the British capital, nor the fascinations of fashionable life, nor the pointed attentions which at that peculiar period were liberally lavished upon distinguished Americans, could longer detain him from the endearments of domestic life, and the society of a wife and family to whom he was tenderly attached. He embarked in a vessel bound to New York, in the month of August, and after a prosperous passage of twenty-six days, arrived at the port of destination about the fourteenth of September, 1767. He was received by his neighbours, relatives and friends, who testified their admiration of his character by escorting him

to his residence, with the highest respect and most cordial affection.

In the year 1768, he was elevated to a seat in the supreme royal legislative judiciary, and executive council of the province, enjoying at the same time the full favour of the royal government, and the undiminished confidence of his friends and fellow citizens. In 1774 he was appointed one of the judges of the supreme court, and for some time performed the duties of that office as an associate with his old preceptor, David Ogden. During a happy interval of a few years, he cultivated and embellished an extensive and fertile landed estate, where he resided in the perfect enjoyment of every domestic blessing, surrounded by his family, and possessed of an ample fortune.

But the storm which had been so long and gloomily gathering, now began to burst over the land, and prognosticate the desolation which attended the climax of its fury. The domestic felicity of Mr. Stockton was necessarily interrupted by the portentous aspect of public affairs, which indicated the approach of extensive private and political calamity. Holding a high and honourable station under the government of a monarch whose personal character he greatly respected, although he believed him to be misled by a corrupt ministry, and who had honoured him with especial marks of confidence, he was now compelled either to renounce his allegiance to that sovereign, or depart from the duties which he owed to his native land, and dissolve the ties that bound him to a country which contained the sepulchres of his ancestors.

Although the sacrifice may have been painful, it was made cheerfully and without hesitation. When the counsels of the marquis of Rockingham, the earl of Chatham, and other British patriots, were rejected, and he discovered that the British ministry had again resolved to enforce the odious

right which they claimed of taxing the American colonies without their own consent, or granting them any representation in parliament, he promptly selected the course of conduct which he conceived it his duty to adopt. Although he had received numerous indications of official favour and personal attention from the king and many of the most eminent statesmen of the British empire, yet after contributing his strenuous exertions, in the first stages of the dispute, to effect a reconciliation between the mother country and the colonies, on principles consistent with civil liberty and the just rights of his country, he considered himself bound by paramount obligations, when the crisis of serious contest had arrived, to enrol himself among the defenders of American freedom. Separating, therefore, from his fellow members of the royal council, to whom as individuals he was warmly attached, but who, with the exception of lord Stirling, John Stevens, and himself, were all royalists or neutrals, he exerted himself on all proper occasions among the primary assemblies of the people, to procure the organization of a prudent and well directed opposition to the arbitrary measures of the British ministry.

On the twenty-first of June, 1776, the public confidence reposed in the patriotism, firmness, and abilities of Mr. Stockton, was honourably manifested by the proceedings of the provincial congress of New Jersey, which elected him a member of the general congress then sitting in the city of Philadelphia. Among his colleagues was the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, to whose happy emigration to America he is supposed to have been peculiarly instrumental. He, in conjunction with his fellow delegates from New Jersey, was empowered and directed to unite with the representatives of the other colonies in the most vigorous measures for supporting the just rights and liberties of America, and, if it should

be deemed necessary or expedient, to concur in declaring the United Colonies independent of Great Britain, entering into confederation for union and common defence, making treaties for commerce and assistance, and adopting such other measures as might appear necessary to effect the accomplishment of these great designs.

Mr. Stockton immediately took his seat in the continental congress, and was present at the debates which preceded the promulgation of that memorable charter of national independence to which his name is affixed. It has been remarked by Dr. Benjamin Rush, who was a member of the same congress that Mr. Stockton was silent during the first stages of this momentous discussion, listening with thoughtful and respectful attention to the arguments that were offered by the supporters and opponents of the important measure then under consideration. Although it is believed that, in the commencement of the debate, he entertained some doubts as to the policy of an immediate declaration of independence, yet in the progress of the discussion his objections were entirely removed, particularly by the irresistible and conclusive arguments of John Adams, and he fully concurred in the final vote in favour of that bold and decisive measure. This concurrence he expressed in a short but energetic address, which he delivered in congress towards the close of the debate.

He manifested his accustomed diligence and ability in the performance of his congressional duties, and was frequently appointed on the more important committees. His acute perceptions, logical powers of reasoning, superior eloquence, remarkable sagacity, and matured experience of men and things, united with a profound knowledge of law and politics, were properly appreciated by his associates, among whom he held a distinguished rank.

In the month of September, 1776, at the first joint meeting of the state delegates under the new constitution, William Livingston and Mr. Stockton were the first republican candidates for the office of governor. On the first ballot they received an equal number of votes, but, as the emergency of the crisis required an immediate nomination, the friends of Mr. Stockton were induced to acquiesce in the final election of his competitor. He was, however, immediately chosen, by a unanimous vote, chief justice of the state, which office he declined.

It is important, in relation to all matters connected with the infancy of the republic and the character of our political history, to correct the errors which have designedly or accidentally been introduced into the histories of that momentous period. An anecdote related by Dr. Gordon in his historical letters concerning the American revolution, in relation to the contested election of Mr. Livingston, is manifestly undeserving of credit, and would imply a deficiency of patriotism on the part of Mr. Stockton, which never existed. He observes that the legislature, in electing the first governor of New Jersey, was at first divided by an equality of suffrages between Mr. Livingston and Mr. Stockton. At this crisis, he asserts that Mr. Stockton refused to permit the employment of his horses in the public service, which denial being made known to the members of the house, they were induced immediately to devolve the choice upon Mr. Livingston.

Connected with a work so pregnant with fables and misrepresentations as the letters of Dr. Gordon, this passage might have been permitted to pass without animadversion, but it assumes a more important character in relation to the special biography of Mr. Stockton. It charges him with a lukewarmness in the cause of his country which he was incapable of feeling, and burdens his character with the indirect

displeasure of the legislature, which, it is expressly proved, by the subsequent measures of that body, was never entertained. The circumstance which is related by Dr. Gordon never occurred; its absurdity is rendered palpable by a reference to the records of the day, which prove the unanimous election of Mr. Stockton as chief justice of the state, by the identical legislature which is supposed, on the preceding day, to have so highly disapproved of his conduct as to reject him as governor. When to this mark of confidence is added his re-election to congress on the thirtieth of November, about three months subsequent to this hypothetical occurrence, we are enabled properly to estimate the assertion of Dr. Gordon.

Mr. Stockton, during the summer and autumn of 1776, continued an assiduous and laborious attendance on his duties in congress. On the twenty-sixth of September, he was deputed, in conjunction with his friend and fellow member, George Clymer, of Pennsylvania, on a committee to inspect the northern army. They were empowered to contract for provisions; to provide barracks and clothing for the troops; to make regulations for the hospitals in the northern department; to remove or suspend any persons employed therein, and employ such as they might think necessary and proper; to assist in the military councils relative to the best mode of re-enlisting the army; and, finally, to report to congress the state of the army, and any further regulations which they might think necessary for its better government and supply. They proceeded to Albany, Saratoga, &c. and every facility to effect the important objects of their mission was afforded by the polite attentions and cordial concurrence of general Schuyler, who commanded the northern army. This service having been discharged in a successful and exemplary manner, Mr. Stockton immediately resumed his seat in congress.

A paramount duty soon required his absence from the public councils. The residence of his wife and infant family being in the direct route of the triumphant enemy, he was compelled to make preparations for removing them to a place of safety. After remaining in his dwelling to the latest period that the safety of his family admitted, affording to the remnant of our distressed army every assistance within his power, as the dejected troops passed along in melancholy succession, he conveyed his wife and younger children into the county of Monmouth, about thirty miles from the supposed route of the British army.

On the thirtieth of November, he was, together with his friend and compatriot John Covenhoven, at whose house he resided, unfortunately captured by a party of refugee royalists, through the treachery of a man acquainted with the place of his temporary residence, dragged from his bed by night, stripped and plundered of his property, and carried by the way of Amboy to New York. At Amboy he was exposed to the severity of extremely cold weather, in the common gaol, which barbarity, together with his subsequent treatment in New York, laid the foundation of the disease which terminated his existence in 1781. On his removal to New York, he was ignominiously consigned to the common prison, and without the least regard for his rank, age, and delicate health, for some time treated with unusual severity. He was not only deprived of the comforts, but the necessities of life, having been left more than twenty-four hours without food, and afterward afforded a very coarse and limited supply. The inhuman treatment which he received, so repugnant to the principles of civilized warfare, and so intolerable to an individual who had been accustomed to all the comforts and delicacies of life, depressed his spirits and seriously affected his health.

So excessively malignant, indeed, was the conduct of the British in relation to Mr. Stockton, that it attracted the special attention of the general congress, who immediately passed the following resolution, which still appears on their journals.

"Whereas congress hath received information that the honourable Richard Stockton, of New Jersey, and a member of this congress, hath been made a prisoner by the enemy, and that he hath been ignominiously thrown into a common gaol, and there detained: Resolved, that general Washington be directed to make immediate inquiry into the truth of this report, and if he finds reason to believe it well founded, that he send a flag to general Howe remonstrating against this departure from that humane procedure which has marked the conduct of these states to prisoners who have fallen into their hands; and to know of general Howe whether he chooses this shall be the future rule for treating all such, on both sides, as the fortune of war may place in the hands of either party."

After the release of Mr. Stockton, his constitution was so materially impaired that he was never again able, except by occasional counsel and advice, to render any important services to his country. In fact, during the few remaining years of his life, he was never perfectly restored to health. His fortune, which had been ample, was greatly diminished, both by the depreciation of the continental currency, and the wanton depredations of the British army. His papers and library, one of the best possessed by any private citizen at that period, were burned; his domestic animals, (particularly his fine stock of horses,) and almost all his personal property, were plundered or destroyed, and his farm laid waste. Mr. Stockton now found himself the proprietor of a little more than his devastated lands, and was compelled to have recourse to the temporary aid of some of his friends, whose losses had been

less extensive, for a present supply of such articles of necessity as were essential to relieve the pressure of absolute suffering.

It is not remarkable that these complicated afflictions entirely destroyed his health and spirits, during the declining years of his life. He languished a long time, oppressed with a protracted malady; the last stages of this too were rendered peculiarly distressing by a malignant cancerous affection, the pain of which was so extreme, that he could not enjoy the least repose without the aid of anodyne medicines. He died on the twenty-eighth day of February, 1781, at his residence near Princeton, in the county of Somerset, in the fifty-first year of his age. Previous to interment, his remains were conveyed to the college hall, where, in the presence of a numerous and afflicted audience, consisting of the friends, relatives, and fellow citizens, of the deceased patriot, and the students of the college, an interesting funeral discourse was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Samuel S. Smith, then vice president of that celebrated seat of science.

Mr. Stockton was at all times a sensible and dignified speaker, remarkable for solidity, perspicuity, and energy. He was a profound and erudite lawyer, and his decisions and opinions while on the bench, in committees of congress, on admiralty questions, and in the high court of errors of New Jersey, were considered of high authority. His study of the great orators of antiquity, with whose writings, in the original languages, he was familiar, his acquaintance with the best writers of modern times, and his practical opportunities of hearing the Ciceros and Demosthenes of Great Britain, uniting with his native genius, invested him with a superior and powerful eloquence, which has rarely been exceeded in this country. He also possessed a natural inclination towards music, and a refined taste for poetry, painting, and the fine arts in general.

Mr. Stockton, when unadorned by the gorgeous robes of judicial office that prevailed previous to the revolution, was neat but simple in his dress. Before the revolutionary contest, he lived in a state of splendor, frequently adopted by distinguished men under the royal government, which the advantages of a country residence and the possession of affluence, rendered easy and agreeable. Every stranger who visited his mansion was cordially welcomed in the genuine style of ancient hospitality, and it was customary in those days for travellers and visitors to call upon men of rank.

During his forensic career, the celebrity of his superior talents was so great, that the first gentlemen of the country considered it of material importance to the future prospects of their sons, to procure their instruction in the science of law under the inspection of Mr. Stockton. Some of the most distinguished lawyers in the United States were educated by him, among whom may be mentioned the late Elias Boudinot, and William Patterson; the latter had been governor of the state, and at the time of his death, was a judge of the supreme court of the United States. The late governor Joseph Reed, and Jonathan D. Sergeant, of Pennsylvania, colonel William Davies, of Virginia, and many others, profited by his tuition. His friend, the late Walter Rutherford, believing a knowledge of jurisprudence to be indispensable to a finished education, entrusted his only son, the heir to a splendid fortune, and now the well known John Rutherford, of New Jersey, to the charge of Mr. Stockton, with whom he remained several years.

Mr. Stockton possessed a generous and intrepid spirit: he was naturally somewhat hasty in his temper, and quickly inflamed by any attempts to deceive or oppress him; but he was placable, and readily pacified by the acknowledgment of error. Revenge, or permanent malice or resentment, were never harboured in his breast. He was an affectionate father, a tender

husband, and an indulgent master; mild and courteous to his equals, and just and merciful to his tenants, debtors, and dependants. To his inferiors, and those who sought his favour and conciliated his affections, he was affable and kind; but to those who supposed themselves his superiors, his carriage was stern and lofty, and if their self-sufficiency was manifested by any want of decorum or personal respect, it was, perhaps, his spile to evince an unnecessary portion of haughtiness and resentment.

• He was a man of great coolness and courage. His bodily powers, both in relation to strength and agility, were of a very superior grade, and he was highly accomplished in all the manly exercises peculiar to the period in which he lived: his skill as a horseman and swordsman was particularly great. In person he was tall and commanding, approaching nearly to six feet in height. His manners were dignified, simple though highly polished, and to strangers, at the first interview, apparently reserved; but as the acquaintance advanced, they were exceedingly fascinating and accomplished, which appeared particularly conspicuous towards his friends and companions.

His eyes were of a light gray colour, and his physiognomy open, agreeable, and manly. When silent, or uninterested in conversation, there was nothing remarkably attractive in his countenance, but when his mind was excited, his eyes instantly assumed a corresponding brilliancy, his whole appearance became excessively interesting, and every look and action strongly expressive of such emotions as he wished to produce. The portrait exhibited in the Declaration of Independence, a painting by colonel Trumbull, does not afford a just resemblance of Mr. Stockton. That eminent artist, not possessing the opportunity of procuring it from the living object, was compelled to copy it from a portrait of Mr. Stockton,

not only indifferently executed, but which had been delineated in the early part of life.

His forensic career was attended with unrivalled reputation and success, and he refused to engage in any cause which he knew to be unjust, invariably standing forth in the defence of the helpless and oppressed. To his superior powers of mind and professional learning, he united a flowing and persuasive eloquence, and he was a christian who was an honour to the church. He was a learned, firm, and upright judge, and an early and decided opposer of the political and oppressive claims of the British parliament.

It may be truly said, in the words of Shakspeare,

“ He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one,
Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and perswading,
Lofty and stern to them that loved him not,
But, to those men that sought him, sweet as summer.”

The first and richest legacy bequeathed by Mr. Stockton in his last testament, illustrates his religious principles, and the importance which he attached to the doctrines of the christian religion. “As my children,” he observed, “will have frequent occasion of perusing this instrument, and may probably be particularly impressed with the last words of their father, I think it proper here, not only to subscribe to the entire belief of the great and leading doctrines of the christian religion, such as the being of a God, the universal defection and depravity of human nature, the divinity of the *Person*, and the completeness of the redemption purchased by the Blessed Saviour; the necessity of the operations of the divine Spirit, of divine faith accompanied with an habitual virtuous life, and the universality of the divine providence; but also, in the bowels of a father’s affection, to charge and exhort them

to remember that the "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." Although he condemned versatility in the mode of publicly worshipping the Almighty, he acknowledged none of those bigoted, and, in some degree, antichristian principles, which frequently actuate the sectary in his religious professions. This benevolent and truly pious trait in his character cannot be better elucidated than by an extract from the counsels which he bequeathed to his immediate descendants. After recommending an early attention to religion, he thus continues: "As Almighty God has not been pleased in the Holy Scriptures to prescribe any precise mode in which he is to be publicly worshipped, all contention about it generally arises from want of knowledge or want of virtue. I have no particular advice to leave to my children upon this subject, save only, that they deliberately and conscientiously, in the beginning of life, determine for themselves with which denomination of christians they can most devoutly worship God, and that after such determination they steadily adhere to that denomination, without being given to change, and without contending against, or judging, others who may think or act differently in a matter so immaterial to substantial virtue and piety."

The sermon delivered at the obsequies of Mr. Stockton contains a just summary of his character and virtues; and those parts which particularly set out the estimation in which he was held by his countrymen will form the conclusion of the present sketch.

"Behold, my brethren," said the reverend Dr. Smith, "before your eyes a most noble and affecting picture of the same truth, (the transiency of mortal things,) in the remains of a man who has been long the foremost of his country, for power, for wealth, for fortune; whose eloquence only wanted a tongue to have rivalled the Greek; and who, if that honours

this young country can bestow, if many and great personal talents, could save man from the grave, would not thus have been lamented here by you. Behold there 'the end of all perfection.'

"It was one of his earliest honours to have been a son of this college, and it was one of the first honours of this college, to have given birth to such a son. After having adorned the place of his education by his talents, he soon rose to the board of its trustees, and hath ever since been one of its most distinguished patrons.

"Young gentlemen, (the students of the college,) another of the fathers of learning and of eloquence is gone. He went before you in the same path in which you are now treading, and hath since long presided over, and helped to confirm, the footsteps of those who were here labouring up the hill of science and virtue. While you feel and deplore his loss as a guardian of your studies, and as a model upon which you might form yourselves for public life, let the memory of what he *was* excite you to emulate his fame; let the sight of what he *is*, teach you that every thing human is marked with imperfection.

"At the bar he practised for many years with unrivalled reputation and success. Strictly upright in his profession, he scorned to defend a cause that he knew to be unjust. A friend to peace and to the happiness of mankind, he has often with great pains and attention reconciled contending parties, while he might fairly, by the rules of his profession, have drawn from their litigation no inconsiderable profit to himself. Compassionate to the injured and distressed, he hath often protected the poor and helpless widow unrighteously robbed of her dower, hath heard her with patience when many wealthier clients were waiting, and hath zealously promoted her interest without the prospect of reward, unless

he could prevail to have right done to her, and to provide for her an easy competence for the rest of her days.

“Early in his life, his merits recommended him to his prince and to his country, under the late constitution, who called him to the first honours and trusts of the government. In council he was wise and firm, but always prudent and moderate. Of this he gave a public and conspicuous instance, almost under your own observation, when a dangerous insurrection in a neighbouring county had driven the attorneys from the bar, and seemed to set the laws at defiance. Whilst all men were divided betwixt rash and timid counsels, he only, with wisdom and firmness, seized the prudent mean, appeased the rioters, punished the ring-leaders, and restored the laws to their regular course.

“The office of a judge of the province was never filled with more integrity and learning than it was by him, for several years before the revolution. Since that period, he hath represented New Jersey in the congress of the United States. But a declining health, and a constitution worn out with application and with service, obliged him, shortly after, to retire from the line of public duty, and hath at length dismissed him from the world.

“In his private life he was easy and graceful in his manners; in his conversation, affable and entertaining, and master of a smooth and elegant style even in his ordinary discourse. As a man of letters, he possessed a superior genius, highly cultivated by long and assiduous application. His researches into the principles of morals and religion were deep and accurate, and his knowledge of the laws of his country extensive and profound. He was well acquainted with all the branches of polite learning; but he was particularly admired for a flowing and persuasive eloquence, by which he long governed in the courts of justice.

"As a christian, you know that, many years a member of this church, he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Nor could the ridicule of licentious wits, nor the example of vice in power, tempt him to disguise the profession of it, or to decline from the practice of its virtues. He was, however, liberal in his religious principles. Sensible, as became a philosopher, of the rights of private judgment, and of the difference in opinion that must necessarily arise from the variety of human intellects, he was candid, as became a christian, to those who differed from him, where he observed their practice marked with virtue and piety. But if we follow him to the last scene of his life, and consider him under that severe and tedious disorder which put a period to it, there the sincerity of his piety, and the force of religion to support the mind in the most terrible conflicts, was chiefly visible. For nearly two years he bore, with the utmost constancy and patience, a disorder that makes us tremble only to think of it.

With most exquisite pain it preyed upon him, until it reached the passages by which life is sustained : yet, in the midst of as much as human nature could endure, he always discovered a submission to the will of heaven, and a resignation to his fate, that could only flow from the expectation of a better life.

"Such was the man whose remains now lie before us to teach us the most interesting lessons that mortals have to learn,—the vanity of human things ; the importance of eternity ; the holiness of the divine law ; the value of religion ; and the certainty and rapid approach of death."

sphere of so much usefulness, comfort, and respectability, he was, happily for this country, subsequently persuaded to listen to the invitation from a distant colony; thus distinctly proving how little regardful he was of personal interest when opposed to what he conceived to be the claims of duty. Another evidence of the pure and disinterested motives which induced him to leave the scene of his happiness and honour, is contained in the loss of fortune which it involved. Not long before he left Scotland, and while in a state of suspense on the subject of emigration, a gentleman, possessed of a large property, an old bachelor, and a relation of the family, agreed to make him his heir, provided he would not go to America.

On the nineteenth of November, 1766, the trustees of the college of New Jersey, unanimously elected Dr. Witherspoon to the office of president, and transmitted a letter to Mr. Stockton, a member of the board, then in London, requesting him by personal application to solicit a compliance with the wishes of the trustees. Party views and feelings were, at this period, mingled with the management of the college, and such representations of its state were made to Dr. Witherspoon, as were calculated to induce him to refuse the presidency; and this effect was actually produced, until his misapprehensions were removed by an agent of the board. On the first of October, 1767, a letter from Dr. Witherspoon was communicated to the trustees, in which he declined an acceptance of the presidentship of the college. This refusal, however, was not occasioned by the discouraging accounts which had been transmitted to Scotland relative to the state of the institution: his unfavourable impressions in that respect, which at first were very strong, had been entirely removed. To dissolve connexions at home, that had been so long endeared to him, to violate all the attachments and habits of the female part of his family, to abandon the theatre of his

happiness and fame, and, in the prime of life, to bury himself, as it were, in a new and distant country, were sorrowful and weighty considerations. But the reluctance of Mrs. Witherspoon to leave her native country was the principal cause of his refusal, at this time. She was afterwards perfectly reconciled to his removal; and with the affection and piety for which she was eminently distinguished, cheerfully accompanied her husband to a foreign country, with no expectation of ever returning to the "land of her father's sepulchres."

Urged by the representations of those friends whose judgment he most respected, and whose friendship he most esteemed, and animated by the hope that he might repay his sacrifices by greater usefulness in the ministry; and in the interests of learning in the new world, he finally resolved to wave every other consideration, to cross the ocean, and to assume the important charge to which he had been called by the concurrent wishes of all the friends of the college. On the ninth of December, 1767, Mr. Stockton informed the board of trustees, that the difficulties which had prevented Dr. Witherspoon's acceptance of the presidentship, were now removed; and that, upon a re-election, he would consider it a duty to enter into that public service. This intelligence was received with peculiar satisfaction, and he was immediately and unanimously re-elected. About two months before, Dr. Samuel Blair had been appointed president, but having ascertained that the re-election of Dr. Witherspoon would secure his services and influence in favour of the college, he made a prompt and voluntary tender of his resignation, and thus prevented the embarrassment in which the board of trustees might otherwise have been involved. Dr. Witherspoon considered this act as an instance of disinterestedness and generosity, highly creditable to Mr. Blair.

Dr. Witherspoon arrived with his family in Princeton, in August, 1768, and on the seventeenth of that month was inaugurated at a special meeting of the board of trustees. He was the sixth president of the college, from its foundation in 1746 ; his predecessors, Dickenson, Burr, Edwards, Davies, and Finley, were deservedly celebrated for their genius, learning, and piety. The fame of his literary character, which had preceded him to this country, brought a great accession of students to the institution. This influence was greatly increased by the circumstance of his being a foreigner, but his reputation was widely extended, and he enjoyed an additional advantage by introducing the more recent improvements in the system of education. When he assumed his office, his prudence, talents, and weight of character, not only put an end to party measures in the board of trustees, but greatly contributed to produce the same effect in the councils of the church to which he belonged.

One of the first benefits which the college received from the appointment of its new president, was the augmentation of its funds, which, from a variety of causes, were then in a low and declining condition. At that period, it had never enjoyed any resources from the state ; but was entirely dependent on private liberality and zeal. The reputation of Dr. Witherspoon excited fresh generosity in the public, and his personal exertions, which extended from Massachusetts to Virginia, rapidly improved its finances, and placed them in a flourishing condition. It was, indeed, afterwards prostrated by the revolutionary war, which almost annihilated its resources ; but the friends of learning must recollect, with gratitude, how much that institution owed to his enterprise and talents. The principal advantages, however, which it derived, were from his literature ; his mode of superintendency ; his example as a happy model of good writing ; and

the tone and taste which he gave to the literary pursuits of the college.

The piety, erudition, knowledge of the world, and deep insight into human nature, possessed by Dr. Witherspoon, qualified him, in an eminent degree, for the station which he now filled ; and no man was more prompt and popular as presiding officer of a literary institution. In addition to the benefits derived from his great reputation, by the accession of students, and the formation of funds, he endeavoured to establish the system of education in the college, upon the most extensive and respectable basis that its situation and finances would permit. The course of instruction had formerly been too limited ; and its metaphysics and philosophy were strongly tinctured with the dry and uninstrusive forms of the schools. This, however, was not to be imputed as a defect, to those excellent men, who had previously presided over the institution : it rather arose from the recent origin of the country, the imperfection of its social condition, and the state of its literature. Mathematical science received, during his presidency, an extension that was before unknown in the college. He introduced into philosophy, all the most liberal and modern improvements of Europe ; and extended the philosophical course, so as to embrace the general principles of policy and public law. He incorporated with it, sound and rational metaphysics, equally remote from the doctrines of fatality and contingency, from the barrenness and dogmatism of the schools, and from the excessive refinements of those contradictory, but equally impious, sects of scepticism, which wholly deny the existence of matter, or maintain that nothing but matter exists, in the universe. He laid the foundation of a course of history ; and the principles of taste, and the rules of good writing, were as happily explained by him, as they were exemplified in his manner. It is believed that he was the

first man who taught, in America, the substance of those doctrines of the philosophy of the mind, which Dr. Reid afterwards developed with so much success. He caused an important revolution in the system of education, whereby literary inquiries and improvements became more liberal, more extensive, and more profound. An admirable faculty for governing, and exciting the emulation of the youth committed to his care, contributed to the success of his various efforts to perfect the course of instruction. The great number of men of eminent talents, in the different liberal professions, who received from him the elements of their education, is the best evidence of his services in the college. Under his auspices, a large proportion of the clergy of the Presbyterian church was formed; and to his instructions, America owed many of her most distinguished patriots and legislators. He introduced a system of public voluntary competitions among the students, in the various branches of study pursued in the college. One of these consisted in translating any given phrase of English into Latin, on the spot, and without previous preparation; and in an extemporaneous exercise in writing Latin, for the completion of which a short specified time of a few minutes only were allowed: the competition in Greek was only in reading, translating, and analysing the language. Thus, faithfully and perseveringly, he continued to guide the course of education in the institution over which he presided, until the revolutionary war suspended his functions, and dispersed the college.

When the academical shades were deserted, Dr. Witherspoon found himself introduced into a new field of labour, and he appeared in a character widely different from any in which he had heretofore been presented to the public. Yet this new scene gave fresh lustre to his fame; and his talents as a legislator portrayed in vivid colours the extent and va-

riety of his mental abilities. Casting aside his foreign prejudices, and embracing with facility the ideas and habits of a new country, and a new state of society, he became an American the moment he landed on our shores. Being opposed in principle to the unjust pretensions of the British government, he adopted the views, and participated in the councils, of the colonists, in the earliest stages of the contest. The citizens of New Jersey, who knew and valued his distinguished talents, soon selected him as one of the most suitable delegates to the convention which formed their republican constitution in 1776. The professors of the law were lost in astonishment, when he appeared in this respectable assembly as profound a civilian as he had before been known to be a philosopher and divine.

After having taken an active and decided part in the revolutionary committees and conventions of the state, he was summoned to the discharge of more important duties. On the twenty-first of June, 1776, the provincial congress of New Jersey, reposing special confidence in his integrity and patriotism, elected him a delegate to the general legislature, with instructions to unite with the delegates from the other colonies, in declaring them to be independent of the mother country, should such a measure be considered necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties. Dr. Witherspoon took his seat in congress, a few days previous to the fourth of July, and assisted in those important deliberations which resulted in that deed of noble daring, which severed the two countries for ever. When a distinguished member of congress said that we were "not yet ripe for a declaration of independence," Dr. Witherspoon replied, "in my judgment, sir, we are not only ripe but rotting."

During the sessions of 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, 1781, and 1782, he continued to represent the state of New Jersey in

the general congress, with unyielding zeal and perseverance. It is recorded as an evidence of his devotion to public affairs, that he sometimes attended in his seat, without the least intermission, during the whole period of his annual appointments. Such close attendance was not required by his constituents, nor was it of common occurrence, even in that season of heroism and self-denial. The state governments duly regarded the private affairs, and provided for the relaxation, of the members, by appointing supernumerary congressional delegates, of whom a certain number was empowered to act as their representatives. From New Jersey they were generally five in number, but two formed a full delegation; thus by apportioning their official term, the weight of political labour became comparatively light, and the division afforded to each member a remission from duty, during many months in the year. This retirement, however, was entirely optional, and Dr. Witherspoon never permitted any personal considerations to interfere with the course of his official duties. In the month of November, 1782, he finally retired from congress, after a long series of important services. The energy, promptitude, and talents, which he displayed in every branch of public business that required his attention, and the political wisdom and experience with which he enriched the national council, attracted the confidence and admiration of his colleagues, and elevated him, with rapidity, to the first ranks among the assembled sages and senators of America. He was always firm in the most gloomy and formidable aspects of public affairs, and always discovered the greatest power and presence of mind in the most embarrassing situations. But the glorious struggle, in which he had participated, was drawing to an honourable conclusion, and sensibly feeling, as a sexagenarian, the advances of age, he resolved to resign his seat in congress: and,

had he not deemed his continued exertions an imperative duty, would have gladly retired, in some measure, from the burdens of the college. While he was engaged in serving his country in the character of a civilian, he did not lay aside his ministry. He eagerly embraced every opportunity of preaching, and of discharging the various duties of his station as a gospel minister, which he considered as his highest honour. Nor would he ever consent, as some other clerical members of congress did, to change, in any particular, the dress which distinguished his order.

It is impossible to specify the numerous services in which he was engaged, during his long continuance in congress, but he participated largely in the toils of the arduous and expensive mode of prosecuting the public business, adopted by that body, in the appointment of boards and committees. His talents as a politician had been thoroughly tested, previous to his emigration, as leader of the orthodox party in the church of Scotland; and he was fully prepared to play a much more important part on the theatre of our grand revolution, than by displaying his eloquence and sagacity in the presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies, of Scotland. His powers of memory were of vast importance to him in congress: he often remarked that he could precisely repeat a speech, or sermon, written by himself, by reading it over only three times. The management of his memory, and its best application to the interests of the cause, were skilfully conducted. He seldom entered fully into any debate at first, but reserved himself for a concentrated effort: having made himself master of his subject, he methodically composed a speech, committed it to memory, and delivered it in congress. Being a ready speaker, and possessing a remarkable talent for extemporaneous discourse, he prefaced his written orations, by replying to some previous speaker, and dexterously proceeding with his pre-

parted speeches, astonished the whole house by the regular arrangement of his ideas, his command of language, and his precision on subjects of importance.

On the seventh of October, 1776, he was appointed a member of the secret committee, the duties of which required indefatigable attention, and were of the first importance in the prosecution of the war. In the following month, congress took into consideration the lamentable state of the army, which, dispirited by losses and fatigues, was retreating almost naked and barefooted, in the cold of November, before a numerous, well appointed, and victorious army, through a desponding country, "much more disposed to secure safety by submission, than to seek it by a manly resistance." A great number of the troops had disbanded, the terms of service of many others had nearly expired, and the army was melting away under the influence of this fatal and universal cause. Little hope existed of retaining them after they possessed a legal right to be discharged, nor of supplying their places with other recruits. This rapid enfeebling of a feeble army, accelerated by the numerous desertions of the Pennsylvania militia, contributed to the general opinion that the contest was approaching its termination; and that no efforts of the commander in chief could arrest the progress of the enemy in their march towards Philadelphia. The national legislature, finding the army on the eve of dissolution, and aware of the fearful results which might be produced by a dependence on militia, always a more expensive but less efficacious aid than regular forces, resolved to use every exertion to prevent its farther dismemberment. The commanding general, commissioners, and officers, were conjured to recruit, by every means in their power, the regiments whose terms of service had expired, and Dr. Witherspoon, Mr. Pica, and Mr. Ross, were appointed a committee to repair to headquarters, and

co-operate with general Washington in this important business : they were also empowered to inquire into, and redress, to the utmost of their power, the grievances of the soldiers.

On the twelfth of December, congress retired to Baltimore, and a general expectation prevailed that no effectual resistance could be made to the advance of the enemy. But the bold and unexpected attacks made at Trenton and Princeton, had a most extensive influence on the fate of the war, and created a confidence in the body of the people, that proper exertions on their part would be crowned with ultimate success : they saved Philadelphia for the present winter ; they recovered the state of New Jersey ; they revived the drooping spirits of America ; and they gave a sensible impulse to the recruiting service throughout the United States. The firmness manifested by congress during the gloomy and trying period which intervened between the loss of Fort Washington, and the battle of Princeton, entitles the members of that day to the admiration of the world, and the gratitude of their compatriots. Unawed by the dangers with which they were threatened, and regardless of personal safety, they did not, for an instant, admit the idea that the independence they had declared, was to be surrendered, and peace purchased by returning to their ancient colonial situation. As the British army advanced through Jersey, and the consequent insecurity of Philadelphia rendered an adjournment of congress a necessary measure of precaution, their exertions seemed to increase with their difficulties. When re-assembled at Baltimore, their resolutions exhibited no evidences of confusion or dismay ; and the most judicious efforts were made to repair the mischiefs produced by past errors in the military system. They sought to remove the despondency which was seizing and paralysing the public mind, by an address to the states, in which every argument was suggested which could rouse them to vigorous

action. This nervous and eloquent appeal was prepared by a committee, consisting of Dr. Witherspoon, Mr. Richard Henry Lee, and Mr. Adams; who, at the same time, were charged with framing a recommendation to the several states, to appoint a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. In the year 1777, he continued to serve on various important committees, and was particularly active as a member of the board of war.

On the twenty-first of January, 1778, the board of war submitted a report to congress, relative to American prisoners in the power of the enemy, stating in substance, that about nine hundred privates, and three hundred officers, were then in the city of New York; that the former had been crowded all the summer in sugar-houses, and thirty of the latter, confined in the provost-guard, and in the most loathsome jails; that, since the beginning of October, all these prisoners, both officers and privates, had been confined in prison-ships, or the provost; that the general allowance of provisions did not, at the most, exceed four ounces of meat, and the same quantity of bread per man, daily; that the prisoners had been usually treated with unparelleled cruelty, and with the most studied and illiberal insult; that it had been a common practice with the enemy, on the first capture of a prisoner, to keep him three, four, and even five days, without a morsel of provisions of any kind, and then to tempt him to enlist with the new levies, in order to save his life; that there were numerous instances of prisoners perishing in all the agonies of hunger from their severe treatment; and, that being generally stripped, when taken, of the clothes in their possession, they suffered greatly for the want of them, during their confinement. Many other facts were stated, which excited universal indignation and abhorrence. This development of the brutal rigour and insults experienced by their

fellow citizens, excited the strongest sensations in congress, and a series of energetic resolutions were immediately adopted, directing an equal number of the enemy's officers and privates, to be subsisted, imprisoned, and treated in the same manner as the American prisoners were subsisted, imprisoned, and treated by the British. The treatment received by the prisoners in the hands of congress had previously afforded an honourable contrast to the barbarities exercised in New York. They had been plentifully supplied with provisions, and permitted to reside, and purchase, without control, within the jurisdiction of the states; the officers had been suffered to live, on their parole, in good quarters, receiving a weekly allowance of two dollars from congress; and few, even of the privates, had been, for any length of time, confined in jail, but, on the contrary, were allowed to work abroad, and receive the price of their labour. Congress also appointed a committee, consisting of Dr. Witherspoon, Mr. J. B. Smith, Mr. Lovel, and Mr. G. Morris, to prepare a manifesto on the injurious treatment received by the American prisoners. On the thirtieth of the following October, this eloquent protestation was promulgated by the unanimous consent of congress. From the fervid strain of piety in which it is couched, and the solemnity of the appeals to "that Being who is equally the father of All," it would seem to be the work of one of His ministers; and it may, perhaps, be safely assumed to be the production of Dr. Witherspoon, especially as it is well known that the admirable publications of congress, calling their constituents to seasons of fasting and prayer, came from his pen. It concludes in the following manner: "While the shadow of hope remained that our enemies could be taught by our example, to respect those laws which are held sacred among civilized nations, and to comply with the dictates of a religion which they pretend, in common with us, to believe

and revere, they have been left to the influence of that religion and that example. But since their incorrigible dispositions cannot be touched by kindness and compassion, it becomes our duty, by other means, to vindicate the rights of humanity—We, therefore, the congress of the United States of America, do solemnly declare and proclaim, that if our enemies presume to execute their threats, or persist in their present career of barbarity, we will take such exemplary vengeance as shall deter others from a like conduct. We appeal to that God who searcheth the hearts of men, for the rectitude of our intentions; and in his holy presence declare, that as we are not moved by any light and hasty suggestions of anger or revenge, so, through every possible change of fortune, we will adhere to this our determination.”

On the twenty-seventh of August, 1778, Dr. Witherspoon was appointed, together with Robert Morris, Elbridge Gerry, Richard Henry Lee, and Gouverneur Morris, to consider the state of the money and finances of the United States, and report thereon, from time to time; and on the twenty-fifth of November, he submitted to congress, powers to the delegates of New Jersey to ratify the articles of confederation and perpetual union. On the subsequent day, he signed that feeble instrument, which, however, was not rendered complete until the accession of the state of Maryland, on the first of March, 1781. In the year 1779, he particularly distinguished himself as a member of the committee appointed to devise means for procuring supplies for the army, in which duty he was ably assisted by the financial knowledge of Gouverneur Morris, and the economical principles of Roger Sherman.

Numerous applications had been made to congress, on the part of the states of New York and New Hampshire, praying for interference in quelling the disturbances and animosities of the inhabitants of the district entitled the New Hamp-

shire Grants. We have already referred to the difficulties which had arisen on this unfortunate question ; but to settle it finally, on the twenty-second of May, 1779, the delegates from New York proposed a series of resolutions on the subject. They urged that both New Hampshire and New York, at the time when the United States were subject to the crown of Great Britain, exercised jurisdiction over the inhabitants of the district, who now refused their allegiance, and attempted to constitute themselves into a separate state, under the assumed name of Vermont. They further maintained that the thirteen acknowledged states were severally entitled to, and ought to be supported in, the possession of all the lands and territories which appertained of right to each of them while subject to the British king ; and that no part of one or more of the United States ought to be permitted to separate therefrom, and become independent thereon, without the express consent and approbation of such state, or states, respectively. On the first of June, congress resolved to appoint a committee to repair to the inhabitants of the New Hampshire Grants, and investigate the causes of their refusal to continue citizens of the respective states which previously exercised jurisdiction over them : they instructed the committee to confer with the people, and to adopt every prudent measure to promote an amicable settlement of the existing differences, and to prevent divisions and animosities so prejudicial to the interests of the United States. On the succeeding day, Dr. Witherspoon, with four other members, any three of whom were empowered to act, was appointed to execute this delicate and important mission ; and, as congress anticipated very salutary effects from the exertions of their delegates, all further consideration of the subject was postponed until they made their report. Dr. Witherspoon acted in this business with his usual ability and circumspection, and on the thirteenth of

July, he, together with his colleague Mr. Atlee, laid before congress an account of their proceedings in the north. It happened, however, that a majority of the committee did not meet in the district which they were appointed to examine, and the duty being of course informally executed, no regular report was ever made to congress. But the practical information gathered by him, during the excursion, was, doubtless, of great advantage in the deliberations of that body, in the long and intricate arrangement of this revolting affair, which, at one period, endangered the internal peace of the country.

Repeating the impracticability of designating, and commenting on the varied and incessant services performed by Dr. Witherspoon, during his public career, and of analysing the whole extent and power of his political ideas, it may with justice be observed, that, on almost all subjects respecting which he differed from his brethren in congress, his principles have been justified by the result. A few examples are offered in support of this opinion; restricted, however, to his opposition to the expensive mode of supplying the army by commission, to the emission of paper currency, and to his ideas touching the inefficacy of the original confederation.

It was the custom of congress, in the first years of the war, to supply the army by allowing a certain commission per cent. on the monies expended by the commissioners. This stipulated commission, granted as a compensation to the commissary, was founded, in a great measure, on the prejudices entertained against the system adopted by Great Britain for procuring supplies by contract. Dr. Witherspoon was uniformly and strongly opposed to this wasteful system, which, indeed, after some time, excited great disgust. It was considered as an inducement to purchase for the continent at high prices, because the purchaser thereby enhanced his own emoluments. On the twenty-eighth of May, 1779, the board of

treasury submitted a report to congress, in which, after declaring it to be impracticable, in their opinion, to carry on the war by paper emissions, at the existing enormous expenses of the commissary-general's, quarter-master-general's, and medical departments, they stated that an universal opinion prevailed, that one cause of the alarming expenses in those departments was the commissions granted to the numerous persons employed in purchasing for the army; and that a very general dissatisfaction had taken place on that account among the citizens of the United States: hence they recommended that the departments referred to, should be placed on a different footing, with respect to the expenditure of public money. A committee being appointed to devise a plan of retrenchment, the officers who were thus publicly exposed to censure, became dissatisfied and indignant. Colonel Wadsworth, the commissary general of purchases, tendered his resignation; and a similar spirit prevailed among a portion of his deputies and agents. A conciliatory resolution of congress, expressing their full confidence in the integrity and abilities of the heads of the departments, and their speedy intention of adopting measures to distinguish the faithful from the unfaithful among their agents, secured for a time the further services of Mr. Wadsworth, and calmed the agitation which prevailed among his inferior officers.

The committee appointed on the twenty-eighth of May made their report on the ninth of July, 1779, which resulted in nothing more than an earnest request to the executive powers of the several states, to make a strict inquiry into the conduct of the agents of the relative departments, to remove or suspend those guilty of misbehaviour, and to appoint substitutes. The lamentable state of the army towards the close of the year 1779, threatened with actual famine, and perishing with cold, together with the enormous debts contracted

by the public agents, and the total destruction of their credit, demanded the most serious attention of congress. A new arrangement was therefore made on the first of January, 1780, whereby the commissary-general was to receive a fixed nominal salary in the paper currency. But this system was so modified, that it increased, instead of diminishing, the embarrassments of the department; and it was soon found difficult to obtain suitable assistants and agents for the compensation allowed. The crisis now arrived. Colonel Wadsworth advised general Washington, in the month of January, 1780, that, having neither money nor credit, it was out of his power longer to supply the army with meat; and the assistant commissary, residing in camp, gave notice, that his stock of provisions was on the point of being exhausted, and that he had no immediate prospect of a further supply. In this critical situation, the commander in chief was compelled, however disagreeable, to make a requisition on each county in the state of New Jersey, for a certain quantity of meat and flour, and to threaten that, if they did not voluntarily afford the relief required within six days, the extremity of the case would oblige him to resort to impressment. Let it be remembered, in justification of a severe but unavoidable measure, that the patient and heroic army had been, sometimes, five or six days together without bread; at other times, as many days without meat; and once or twice, two or three days without either; and that, at one time, the soldiers eat every kind of horse-food but hay; we may truly say, in the words of Washington to general Schuyler, that being "bereft of every hope from the commissaries, nothing but this great exertion could have saved the army from dissolution, or starving."

This important subject was frequently the object of legislative consideration until the beginning of 1781, when a great

and judicious revolution took place in the civil executive departments, by the appointment of a secretary for foreign affairs, a secretary at war, a secretary of marine, and, above all, of a superintendant of finance. The improvement and regulation of the finances; the establishment of order and economy in the expenditure of the public money; and the direction and control of all persons employed in procuring supplies for the public service; were a part of the duties assigned to the last mentioned officer, the execution of which rescued the country from ruin, and exalted a Morris to the rank and grandeur of a Washington. In all his financial arrangements, Mr. Morris found a warm supporter in Dr. Witherspoon, particularly with respect to the decrease of the army expenditures. He strenuously combated the old mode of supplying the army, until, after a long experience of its ill effects, he, in conjunction with Mr. Morris, and a few firm and judicious associates, prevailed on congress to have it done by contract, or by allowing to the purchaser, a certain sum per ration. This useful and economical measure was adopted on the tenth of July, 1781, when the superintendant of finance was authorised to procure, on contract, all necessary supplies for the use of the army, or armies of the United States, and also for the navy artificers and prisoners of war.

After the first, or second, emission, Dr. Witherspoon resolutely opposed (and even hazarded his popularity by the strenuousness of his opposition) all further issues of the paper currency which inflicted so deep a wound on public credit, and occasioned so much private distress. To liquidate the expenses of the war, immense sums were emitted in bills of credit, and the same method was adopted by the respective states to provide for their internal wants. At length this paper currency, unsupported by solid funds, and resting solely on public credit, was multiplied beyond the rules of

sound policy, and having exceeded the useful demand for it as a medium of commerce, it became proportionably reduced. The arts of open and of secret enemies, the disgraceful avidity of professed friends, and the scarcity of foreign commodities, were assigned by congress as additional causes of the depreciation of the currency, which involved consequences equally obvious and alarming. Depravity of morals, injustice to individuals, a precarious supply for the war, the decay of public virtue, the debasement of the public faith, and the destruction of the honour, safety, and independence of the United States, constituted the long train of evils to be apprehended from that depreciation. On the twenty-third of June, 1775, the first emission of two millions of dollars took place; and on the twenty-ninth of November, 1779, the date of the final issue, the aggregate of the bills, then in circulation, amounted to two hundred millions of dollars: of this sum 63,500,300 dollars were emitted in the year 1778, and 140,052,480 dollars in 1779. This vast quantity of bills had been unavoidably issued at a time when no regular civil governments existed possessing sufficient energy to enforce the collection of taxes, or to provide funds for their redemption.

The rapid depreciation of the continental currency was long viewed with fear and anxiety by the judicious friends of the revolution, and various unsuccessful expedients were essayed for the purpose of checking its progress. The original plan of sinking the bills by apportioning the amount among the several states, totally failed; and the confidence placed in the public authorities was so limited, that it was found necessary, five months after the first emission, to appoint a committee to take into consideration the refusals to receive in payment, or give currency to, the bills that had been issued. On the eleventh of January, 1776, it was resolved that if any person refused to receive those bills in pay-

ment, or endeavoured to obstruct and discourage the currency or circulation thereof, he should be considered, published, and treated, as an enemy of his country, and precluded from all trade or intercourse with the inhabitants of the colonies; and, on the fourteenth of January, 1777, it was decreed, that whosoever should offer, ask, or receive more, in the said bills, for any gold or silver coins, bullion, or any other species of money, than the nominal amount thereof in Spanish milled dollars; or more, in the said bills, for any lands, houses, or goods, than the same could be purchased at, in gold, silver, or any other species of money; or should offer to sell any goods or commodities for gold or silver coins, or any other species of money, and refuse to sell the same for the said continental bills; every such person ought to be deemed an enemy to the liberties of the United States, and to forfeit the value of the money so exchanged, or house, land, or commodity, so sold or offered for sale. It was also recommended to the state legislatures to enact laws inflicting penalties to prevent such pernicious practices; and making the bills of credit issued by congress, a legal tender in payment of public and private debts; and a refusal thereof, an extinguishment of such debts. To aid in restoring the utility, if not the credit, of the continental currency, it was earnestly recommended to the legislatures of the respective states to regulate and ascertain the price of labour, manufactures, internal produce, and commodities imported from foreign countries, and to authorise proper agents to take from any engrossers, forestallers or other persons possessed of a larger quantity of any such commodities or provisions than were competent for the private annual consumption of their families, and who refused to sell the surplus at the regulated prices, paying only those prices for the same. The states were also earnestly requested to refrain from further emissions of bills of credit, to call in their paper-money

in circulation, and cancel it by loans or taxes, and in future to provide for the exigencies of war, and the support of government in that manner.

Numerous other expedients were unsuccessfully resorted to by congress, to check this growing evil, and provide for the current expenses of the war. Among these were the establishment of loan offices, the large quotas demanded from the several states, the requisitions made on them, the redemption of certain emissions, and their acceptance in payment of debts and taxes by the continental treasurer, the cessation of emissions, and decrease of the quantity of bills in circulation. As a specimen of the little reliance and astonishing lukewarmness of the states, the requisition of thirtieth of October, 1781, is produced: at the close of the year 1783, only 1,486,511 dollars and 71 cents had been received at the treasury. Another requisition of two millions, made in October, 1782, was so little regarded, that the superintendant of finance found it better to receive and credit the paltry payments tendered, as part of the previous requisition for eight millions. On the thirteenth of September, 1779, the national debt amounted, in bills of credit, and foreign and domestic loans, to 197,682,985 dollars: at that period, the taxes paid into the treasury only amounted to 3,027,560 dollars, and the sum of the loans received was 33,734,105; so that the aggregate of the monies supplied to congress by the people of America was no more than 36,761,665 dollars. Such were the difficulties to which that body was exposed by the negligence of the state governments, whose dilatory compliance with the requisitions and recommendations of congress, originated those enormous emissions of paper-currency, two hundred millions of which were sunk in the hands of their constituents.

Congress, finding their utmost efforts unavailing, at length determined, by their resolutions of the first and third of Sep-

tember, 1779, that it was inexpedient to derive the supplies for a continuance of the war from emissions of bills of credit. The sum in circulation being now 159,948,880 dollars ; they further resolved, on no account whatever, to emit a greater additional amount than would complete the sum of two hundred millions ; and to issue such part of the balance only, being 40,051,120, as might be absolutely necessary for public exigencies, before adequate supplies could be obtained from the states : the whole amount, however, was completed and expended in less than three months from this time.

This decisive act, however, produced no effect in repairing the credit of a currency, whose diminution in value arose from the vast quantity in circulation : it was, in fact, impossible not to anticipate depreciation, and preposterous to endeavour to correct it, while a community, consisting of three millions, was flooded with an unfunded paper currency amounting to two hundred millions. At length, "the first great and deliberate breach of public faith," as it was styled by Dr. Witherspoon, was committed by the act of eighteenth March, 1780, making silver and gold receivable in payment of the state quotas, at the rate of one Spanish milled dollar in lieu of forty dollars of the paper currency. This "act of bankruptcy," as the duke de Vergennes was pleased to call it, was followed by new estimates of depreciation, of seventy-five and one hundred and fifty, for new state paper, which was itself sunk to two or three for one. Its decline became more rapid as its total dissolution approached, an event in which the number of sufferers was almost co-equal with the amount of the American population.

All the talents and influence of Dr. Witherspoon were opposed to this destructive system of emissions, in every stage of its progress ; and he denounced it as precisely adapted, if any thing could do it, to defeat the revolution. Instead of

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The argumentative eloquence of Dr. Witherspoon, and his few associates, was unable to check those measures of congress in relation to the finances, tending to destroy public credit, which, although unavoidable in principle, he believed to be susceptible of salutary modifications. His remarks on the interest of loan-office certificates will convey some idea of indignant and powerful opposition to all measures calculated to depress public credit, and widen the breach of public faith. On the tenth of September, 1777, congress determined that the interest arising on all loan-office certificates issued, or to be issued, before the first of March, 1778, should be annually paid in bills of exchange on the United States' commissioners in Paris. On the twenty-eighth of June, 1780, it was resolved that all loans that had been made to the United States should be finally discharged, by paying the full current value of the bills when loaned, in Spanish milled dollars; ascertaining the value of the said bills at the date of the loans, by computing thereon a progressive rule of depreciation, commencing with the first day of September, 1777, and continuing, in geometrical progression, from period to period, to the eighteenth of March, 1780. The depreciation, at the several periods, was established as follows.

March 1, 1778, one dollar and three quarters of continental currency for one Spanish milled dollar.

September 1, 1778 ; as four of the former for one of the latter.

March 1, 1779 ; as ten of the former for one of the latter.

September 1, 1779 ; as eighteen of the former for one of the latter.

March 18, 1780 ; as forty of the former for one of the latter.

At the same time, it was determined that the principal of all certificates taken out after the eighteenth of March, 1780, should be discharged at the rate of one Spanish milled dollar for forty dollars of the continental bills of credit : on the eighth of November, the interest on all loan-office certificates, after the twenty-eighth of June, was made payable according to the same rule of depreciation.

While the resolutions for discontinuing the payment of interest on loans by bills on Europe, for the performance of which congress stood formally pledged by their act of tenth September, 1777, was under consideration, Dr. Witherspoon addressed the house in opposition to the full adoption of the measure. He admitted that it might probably be unavoidable in the circumstances to which congress was reduced ; but the step was so full of importance, and its consequences so towering with danger, that a strict scrutiny ought to be instituted, whether any possible addition could be made to it, which might, in some degree, prevent the evils to be apprehended, or, at least, exculpate congress, and convince the public that it proceeded from absolute necessity. " Sir," said he, " if we enter into these resolves as they stand, it will be a deliberate deviation from an express and absolute stipulation, and, therefore, it will give the last stab to public credit. It will be in vain, in future, to ask the public to believe any promise we shall make, even when the most clear and explicit grounds of confidence are produced. Perhaps it will be said

that public credit is already gone ; and it hath been said that there is no more in this, than in neglecting to pay the loan-office certificates of later date ; but though there were no other differences between them, this being another and fresher instance of the same, it will have an additional evil influence on public credit. But, in fact, there is something more in it than in the other : the solemn stipulation of congress, specifying the manner in which the interest was to be paid, was considered as an additional security, and gave a value to these certificates which the others never had. Now it is plain, that the particular promise of giving bills upon Europe, as it had an effect, and was intended to have it, in procuring credit, it must, when broken, or withdrawn, operate in the most powerful manner to our prejudice." After adverting to the depreciation of the currency, and the utter ruin of many within his knowledge, who, relying on the most solemn protestations of congress, that the money should be ultimately redeemed, dollar for dollar, had sold their estates at what they thought a high price, he thus continued : " I cannot help requesting congress to attend to the state of those persons who hold the loan-office certificates which drew interest on France : they are all, without exception, the firmest, and safest friends to the cause of America ; they were in general the most firm and active, and generous friends. Many of them advanced large sums of hard money, to assist you in carrying on the war in Canada. None of them at all put away even the loan-office certificates on speculation, but either from a generous intention of serving the public, or from an entire confidence in the public credit."—" Nothing can be more unequal and injurious, than reckoning the money by the depreciation, either before or after the first of March, 1778 ; for a great part of the money in all the loan-offices, was such as had been paid up in its nominal value, in consequence of the ten-

der laws. This points you, Sir, to another class of people, from whom money was taken; viz. widows and orphans, corporations and public bodies. How many guardians were actually led, or indeed were obliged, to put their depreciated and depreciating money in the funds:—I speak from good knowledge.” Having stated some instances of this nature, he proceeds: “Now it must be known to every body, that since the payment of the interest—bills gave a value to these early loans, many have continued their interest in them, and rested, in a manner, wholly on them for support. Had they entertained the slightest suspicion that they would be cut off, they could have sold them for something, and applied themselves to other means of subsistence; but as the case now stands, you are reducing not an inconsiderable number of your very best friends to absolute beggary. During the whole period, and through the whole system of continental money, your friends have suffered alone; the disaffected and lukewarm have always evaded the burthen, have, in many instances, turned the sufferings of the country to their own account, have triumphed over the whigs, and, if the whole shall be crowned by this last stroke, it seems but reasonable that they should treat us with insult and derision. And what faith do you expect the public creditors should place in your promises of ever paying them at all? What reason, after what is past, have they to dread that you will divert the fund which is now mentioned, as a distant source of payment? If a future congress should do this, it would not be one whit worse than what has been already done.” He then expatiated on the consequences which would immediately follow this resolution;—the most insulting abuse from the enemy; the accusations of the most oppressive tyranny, and grossest fraud; the poisoning of the public mind by making congress ridiculous and contemptible; and the rage and disappointment of their plun-

dered, and long ruined, friends, which, from the effect of power and circumstances in all great and fierce political contentions, might burst forth in furious and violent efforts of despair. "Must this be risked," he exclaimed, "at a crisis when the people begin to be fatigued with the war, to feel the heavy expense of it, by taxes; and when the enemy, convinced of their folly in their former severities, are doing every thing they can to ingratiate themselves with the public at large? But although our friends should not be induced to take violent and seditious measures all at once, I am almost certain it will produce a particular hatred and contempt of congress, the representative body of the union, and a still greater hatred of the individuals who compose the body at this time. One thing will undoubtedly happen, that it will greatly abate the respect which is due from the public to this body, and therefore weaken their authority in all other parts of their proceedings. I beg leave to say, Sir, that in all probability it will lay the foundation for other greater and more scandalous steps of the same kind. You will say, what greater can there be? Look back a little to your history. The first great and deliberate breach of public faith, was the act of eighteenth March, 1780. reducing the money to forty for one, which was declaring that you would pay your debt at sixpence in the pound,—but did it not turn? No: by and by it was set, in this state and others, at seventy-five, and finally at one hundred and fifty, for one, in new paper and in state paper, which in six months rose to four for one. Now, Sir, what will be the case with these certificates? Before this proposal was known, their fixed price was about half a crown for a dollar, of the estimated depreciated value; when this resolution is fairly fixed, they will immediately fall in value, perhaps to a shilling the dollar, probably less. Multitudes of people in despair, and absolute necessity, will sell them for next to no-

thing, and when the holders come at last to apply for their money, I think it highly probable you will give them a scale of depreciation, and tell them they cost so little, that it would be an injury to the public to pay the full value. And in truth, Sir, supposing you finally to pay the full value of the certificates to the holders, the original and most meritorious proprietors will, in many, perhaps in most, cases, lose the whole." After depicting, in a masterly manner, the effect which the adoption of this measure would have on foreign nations, the contemptible light in which this country would be placed by it, and the folly of supposing that other sovereigns would suffer their subjects, who held certificates, to be plundered in so wanton and extravagant a manner, he asks with what face congress could expect to receive credit in foreign parts, and in future loans, after having so notoriously violated every engagement which it had hitherto made ? and concludes by commenting on the facility of procuring funds from our own citizens, if they could but lay a foundation for public credit. " All these things, Mr. President," said he, in concluding, " proceed upon certain and indubitable principles, which never fail of their effect : therefore, you have only to make your payments as soon, as regular, and as profitable, as other borrowers, and you will get all the money you want ; and, by a small advantage over others, it will be poured in upon you, so that you shall not need to go to the lenders, for they will come to you."

Dr. Witherspoon warmly maintained the absolute necessity of union, to impart vigour and success to the measures of government ; and he strongly combated the opinion expressed in congress, that a lasting confederacy among the states, for their future security and improvement, was impracticable. He declared that such sentiments were calculated greatly to derange the minds of the people, and weaken their efforts in

defence of the country. "I confess," said he, "it would to me greatly diminish the glory and importance of the struggle, whether considered as for the rights of mankind in general, or for the prosperity and happiness of this continent in future times. It would quite depreciate the object of hope, as well as place it at a greater distance. For what would it signify to risk our possessions, and shed our blood, to set ourselves free from the encroachments and oppression of Great Britain, with a certainty, as soon as peace was settled with them, of a more lasting war,—a more unnatural, more bloody, and much more hopeless war, among the colonies themselves? Some of us consider ourselves as acting for posterity at present, having little expectation of living to see all things fully settled, and the good consequences of liberty taking effect. But how much more uncertain the hope of seeing the internal contests of the colonies settled upon a lasting and equitable footing?"—"If, at present, when the danger is yet imminent, when it is so far from being over, that it is but coming to its height, we shall find it impossible to agree upon the terms of this confederacy, what madness is it to suppose that there ever will be a time, or that circumstances will so change as to make it even probable, that it will be done at an after season? Will not the very same difficulties that are in our way, be in the way of those who shall come after us? Is it possible that they should be ignorant of them, or inattentive to them? Will they not have the same jealousies of each other, the same attachment to local prejudices, and particular interests? So certain is this, that I look upon it as on the repentance of a sinner: every day's delay, though it adds to the necessity, yet augments the difficulty, and takes from the inclination."

A sentiment expressed in this debate, that it was to be expected from the nature of men, that a time must come when a confederacy would be dissolved and broken to pieces, and

which seemed to create an indifference as to the success of the measure, produced the following burst of eloquence : “ I am none of those who either deny or conceal, the depravity of human nature, till it is purified by the light of truth, and removed by the spirit of the living God. Yet I apprehend there is no force in that reasoning at all. Shall we establish nothing good, because we know it cannot be eternal ? Shall we live without government, because every constitution has its old age, and its period ? Because we know that we shall die, shall we take no pains to preserve, or lengthen out, life ? Far from it, Sir :—it only requires the more watchful attention to settle the government on the best principles, and in the wisest manner, that it may last as long as the nature of things will admit.” Dr. Witherspoon concluded his eloquent arguments in favour of a well-planned confederation, in the following terms : “ For all these reasons, Sir, I humbly apprehend that every argument from honour, interest, safety, and necessity, conspire in pressing us to a confederacy ; and if it be seriously attempted, I hope, by the blessing of God upon our endeavours, it will be happily accomplished.”

But although he supported the necessity of a well organized system of union, he opposed and lamented, in the subsequent formation of the original confederation, the jealousy and ambition of the individual states, which were unwilling to intrust the general government with adequate powers for the common interest. He passed judgment of inefficacy upon it, at the moment of its birth ; but he complained and remonstrated in vain. The ratification of this instrument was obtained with much difficulty. The various amendments proposed by the states, in some instances conflicting with each other, at length successively yielded to the opinion that a federal compact would be of great importance in the prosecution of the war. On the first of March, 1781, this interest-

ing compact, to the great joy
plete. But it was not pro-
sanguine advocates had
Witherspoon were speedily
third day of February, a
tion of the confederacy,
the powers of congress, a
discharging, in part, the prin-
debt. He urged that it was
indispensably necessary that con-
gress should be vested with the right of superintending the
commercial regulations of every state, so that none might
take place inimical to the common interest : and that they
should be vested with the exclusive right of laying duties on
all imported articles ; no restriction to be valid, and no such
duty to be laid, without the consent of nine states. On the
question to agree to this motion, with certain restrictions,
it was decided in the negative ; and a resolution was substi-
tuted, and passed on the same day, *recommending* to the
several states, as indispensably necessary, to vest a power in
congress to levy a duty of five per cent. ad valorem on certain
imported articles, for the use of the United States. This
recommendation was never complied with. Had the policy
proposed by Dr. Witherspoon been pursued, a large share of
the difficulties which ensued would have been evaded. But
a disposition in the members of congress, growing inevitably
out of the organization of the government, to consult the will
of the states from which they were delegated, and perhaps to
prefer their accommodation to any other object, however
essential to the whole, had discovered itself at an early period,
and had gained strength with time. Hence the nation was
thrown at the feet of the states, where the vital principle of
power, the right to levy taxes, was exclusively placed ; and it

merica, was rendered com-
of all the benefits which its
and the predictions of Dr.
fearfully fulfilled. On the
me previous to the comple-
a fresh attempt to enlarge
blish a permanent fund for
and interest of the national

was scarcely possible to advance a single step, but under the guidance of the respective states.

Dr. Witherspoon had many able coadjutors to support his particular and incessant remonstrances against the tardy, insufficient, and faithless manner in providing for the public exigencies and debts, by requisitions on the states. He insisted on the propriety and necessity of the government of the union holding in its own hands the entire regulation of commerce, and the revenues that might be derived from that source: these, he contended, would be adequate to all the wants of the United States, in a season of peace. Overruled, however, at that time, in these, and in other objects of importance, he had the satisfaction of living to see America revert, in almost every instance, to his original ideas; ideas founded on a sound and penetrating judgment, and matured by deep reflection, and an extensive observation of men and things. To the judicious patriots throughout America, the necessity of giving greater powers to the federal head became every day more apparent; as well as the impracticability of continuing the war much longer, if the resources of the country were entirely controlled by thirteen independent sovereignties. But the efforts of enlightened individuals were too weak to correct that fatal disposition of power, which had been made in the first instance, and the impolicy of which was now in vain manifested by experience. Dr. Witherspoon, a leader of the party opposed to the predominant state influence, might well have exclaimed in the words of Washington—"I see one head gradually changing into thirteen. I see one army branching into thirteen; and, instead of looking up to congress as the supreme controlling power of the United States, considering themselves as dependent on their respective states. In a word, I see the power of congress declining too fast for the consequence and respect

which are due to them as the great representative body of America, and am fearful of the consequences."

On the voluntary retirement of Dr. Witherspoon from congress at the close of the year 1779, he determined to give particular attention to the revival of the institution over which he presided. The immediate care of recommencing the course of instruction was committed to the charge of his son-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Smith, a man of distinguished genius and learning. In the month of December, 1779, he resigned his house on the college grounds to Vice President Smith, and retired to his country seat, situated about one mile from, and in full sight of Princeton: but his name continued to add celebrity to the institution, and it rapidly regained its former reputation. Retirement was a happiness towards which he had long looked with pleasing anticipations. In announcing his removal to Tusculum, his country house, he makes the following remarks in a letter to a friend: "This I have had in view for some years, and intend to spend the remainder of my life, if possible, *in otio cum dignitate*. You know I was always fond of being a scientific farmer. That disposition has not lost, but gathered strength, since my being in America. In this respect, I received a dreadful stroke indeed, from the English, when they were here; they having seized and mostly destroyed my whole stock, and committed such ravages that we are not yet fully recovered from it."

But he was not long permitted to enjoy the peaceful happiness of his classical retreat. The voice of his countrymen again summoned him to the national council in the year 1781, and when he finally retired, at the close of 1782, it was to resume only for a short season the tranquil pleasures of Tusculum. In the year 1783, he was induced, contrary to his own judgment, to cross the ocean to endeavour to pro-

note the benefit of the college. The idea of obtaining funds in its behalf, in Great Britain, when the angry sensations, excited by a long war, and the recent dismemberment of the empire, had not yet subsided, was more than visionary. Overruled, however, by the persuasion of his friends, and influenced by his warm attachment to the institution, he embarked in December, 1783; and in the sixtieth year of his age braved the dangers and privations of the sea, to advance the progress of learning in America. The result of his mission accorded with his expectations. Little more than the amount of his necessary expenses was obtained; but notwithstanding this want of success, his enterprize and zeal are not less deserving of commendation. He returned to this country previous to the commencement at Nassau Hall, in September, 1784, having been absent about nine months. Finding nothing to obstruct his entering into that retirement, which was now become more dear to him, he withdrew, in a great measure, except on important occasions, from the exercise of those public functions that were not immediately connected with the duties of his office, as president of the college, or with his character, as a minister of the gospel.

Notwithstanding his high talents and political character, many believed that the principal merit of Dr. Witherspoon appeared in the pulpit. He was, in many respects, one of the best models by which a young clergyman could form himself for usefulness and celebrity. It was a singular benefit to the whole college, but especially to those who had the profession of the ministry in view, to have such an example constantly before them. Religion, from the manner in which he treated it, always commanded the respect of those who heard him, even when it was not able to engage their hearts. An admirable textuary, and a profound theologian, he was perspicuous and simple in his manner; an universal scholar,

he was deeply versed in human nature; a grave, dignified and solemn speaker, he was irresistible in his manner; and he brought all the advantages derived from these sources, to the illustration and enforcement of divine truth. Though not a fervent and animated orator, he was always a solemn, affecting, and instructive preacher. A peculiar affection of the nerves, attended with dizziness, which always overcame him when he gave free vent to his feelings on any subject, obliged him, from his earliest entrance on public life, to impose a strict restraint and guard, upon his sensibility; he once, indeed, fell from the pulpit, in a moment of irresistible religious excitation. He was, therefore, under the necessity of substituting gravity and seriousness of manner, in public speaking, in the room of that fire and warmth, which he was, by nature, well qualified to display, as well as feel, and which he so much admired in others, when managed with prudence. He never read his sermons, nor used even short notes in the pulpit. His practice was to write his sermons at full length, and commit them to memory; but, not restricting himself to the precise words, he often varied from his written discourses, in their delivery, by alterations, additions, and abridgments, which he never suffered to infringe on the strictest accuracy. It was impossible to hear him without attention, or to attend to him without improvement. He possessed a happy talent of unfolding the strict and proper meaning of the sacred writer, in any text from which he chose to discourse; of concentrating and giving perfect unity, to every subject which he treated; and of presenting to the hearer, the most clear and comprehensive views of it. His sermons were distinguished for their judicious and perspicuous divisions; for mingling profound remarks on human life with the illustration of divine truth; and for the lucid order that reigned through the whole. In his discourses he loved, chiefly, to

dwell on the great doctrines of divine grace, and on the distinguishing truths of the gospel. These he brought, as far as possible, to the level of every understanding, and the feeling of every heart. He seldom led his hearers into speculative discussions, and never entertained them by a mere display of talents: all ostentation in the pulpit he viewed with aversion and contempt. During the whole period of his presidency, he was extremely solicitous to train those studious youths who had the ministry of the gospel in view, in such a manner as to secure the greatest respectability, as well as usefulness, in that holy profession. It was his constant advice to young preachers, never to enter the pulpit without the most careful preparation; and it was his ambition, and his hope, to render the sacred ministry, the most learned, as well as the most pious and exemplary body of men in the republic.

His known punctuality and exactness were most sacredly observed in the devotional exercises of the christian life: besides the daily devotions of the closet, and the family, it was his established practice to observe the last day of every year, with his family, as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer; and he was also accustomed to set apart days for secret fasting and prayer, as occasion suggested. He maintained that family religion, and the careful discharge of relative duties, were an excellent incentive to the growth of religion in a man's own soul. "How," said he, "can any person bend his knees in prayer every day with his family, without its being a powerful restraint upon him from the indulgence of any sin which is visible to them? Will such a one, think you, dare to indulge himself in anger, or choose to be seen by them, when he comes home staggering with drunkenness, unfit to perform any duty, or ready to sin still more by the manner of performance? But besides being a restraint

from gross crimes, I cannot help saying, that speaking of the things of God with the concern of a parent, or the humanity of a master, must give a solemnity of spirit, and a sense of their moment, even greater than before. A man cannot speak to the purpose, without feeling what he says; and the new impression will certainly leave behind it a lasting effect. Let me, therefore, earnestly recommend the faithful discharge and careful management of family duties, as you regard the glory of God, the interest of his church, the advantage of your posterity, and your own final acceptance in the day of judgment."

Dr. Witherspoon was a prominent member of the councils and courts of the church, and took an active part in the ecclesiastical politics of his native country. The church of Scotland was divided into two parties, with respect to their ideas of ecclesiastical discipline. The one was willing to confirm, and even extend the right of *patronage*; while the other wished either to abridge these rights, or to confine their operations so as to extend the influence, and secure the consent, of the people in the settlement of ministers. The latter were zealous for the doctrines of grace, and the articles of religion, in all their strictness, as contained in their national Confession of Faith. The former were willing to allow a greater latitude of opinion; and preached in a style that seemed, to the people, to be less evangelical, and less affecting to the heart and conscience, than that of their opponents. In their concern to exempt the clergy of their party from the unreasonable effects of popular caprice, they too frequently protected them against the just complaints of the people. These were styled *moderate men*, while their antagonists were distinguished by the name of the *orthodox*. Dr. Witherspoon, in his church politics, early and warmly embraced the cause of the latter, and ably supported what his opponents denomi-

nated the wildness of orthodoxy, the madness of fanaticism, and the frenzy of the people. This he did from conviction, and, by degrees, acquired such an influence in their councils, that he was considered at length as the head and leader of the party. Before he had acquired this influence, their councils were managed without union and address, while the measures of the moderate party had, for a long time, been conducted by some of the greatest literary characters in the nation. The celebrated Dr. Robertson, at that time the leader of the moderate party, skilfully took advantage of this disunion to divide the forces of his adversary, by placing the matter in such a light, that the most orthodox would decline voting for it at all. It happened among Dr. Witherspoon's party, as it often does among scrupulous and conscientious men who are not versed in the affairs of the world, that each pursued inflexibly his own opinion, as the dictate of an honest conscience. Hence resulted disunion of measures, and consequent defeat. But Dr. Witherspoon's enlarged mind did not refuse to combine the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove; and to him belongs the principal merit of creating among them union and harmony of design, and of concentrating their views, and giving system to their operations. At the time of the coronation of George III. the church of Scotland sent a deputation to congratulate his majesty, and profess their allegiance. It became a question of great interest between the contending parties, which should appoint these delegates. Dr. Witherspoon having matured his plan, and assembled his friends, he submitted it to their inspection, with the assurance that if they faithfully followed his instructions, they would prevail, but if they were divided as usual, they would be defeated. His principal dependence was on the insertion of two individuals belonging to the opposite party, in the ticket which he had formed; but the customary

contracted scruples had nearly rendered his measures abortive. One member observed, that "his light would not suffer him to vote for any of them :—" "Your light is all darkness," said Dr. Witherspoon; and he continued to drill them so adroitly, that he carried the election with ease. The two great leaders of the respective parties were not personal enemies to each other; yet in debate they were often severe in their remarks. In departing from the election room, Dr. Robertson affected to congratulate his opponent on the result, observing, at the same time, that "although he was in the minority, he almost always had the address to come off successful." "I admit," replied Dr. Witherspoon, "your claims to superior skill and management, but you will recollect the authority which tells us, that 'the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.'" On another occasion, having carried some important questions in the general assembly, notwithstanding the efforts of Dr. Robertson, the latter said to him, in a pleasant and easy manner, "I think you have your troops better disciplined than formerly." "Yes," replied the doctor, "by urging your politics too far you have compelled us to beat you with your own weapons."

In the church judicatories of America, he was always upright in his views, firm in his principles, and ready to seize, at once, the right point of view on every question. Disentangling, with facility, the most embarrassed subjects, he was clear and conclusive in his reasoning, and, from a peculiar soundness of judgment, and a habit of business, skilful in conducting every discussion to the most speedy and decisive termination. In fine, the church assuredly lost in him one of its greatest lights; and if the term may be used in ecclesiastical affairs, one of its greatest politicians.

As a writer, his style is simple and comprehensive ; his remarks judicious, and often refined ; his information accurate and extensive ; his matter always weighty and important ; his method condensed, yet lucid, and well arranged. Simplicity, perspicuity, precision, comprehension of thought, and knowledge of the world, and of the human heart, prevailed throughout the whole of his extensive writings. He is said to have remarked, in relation to them, that “ if they were remarkable for any thing, it must be for his attention to general principles, and not to ramifying his subject.” His works have not only extended his reputation through Great Britain and America, but he is deservedly held in high repute among almost all the protestant countries of Europe.

His “ Serious Inquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage,” enters deeply into the human heart. The representation of the new tragedy of Douglas, written by a clergyman of the church to which he belonged, on the Edinburgh theatre, originated this excellent treatise, in which are found numerous refined observations, after the manner of Messieurs de Port-Royal, not obvious to ordinary minds, but perfectly founded on the history of man, and the state of society. Written in a plain and perspicuous style, it is replete with sensible argument, happily arranged, and managed with almost irresistible force. In this Inquiry, he anticipates and precludes every objection, and gives ample proof of the doctrine which he proposes to maintain. The pernicious influence of the stage on the public taste and morals, was never more clearly elucidated. He maintains the opinion of a prior writer, that to send young people to the theatre to form their manners, is to expect “ that they will learn virtue from profligates, and modesty from harlots.” “ It ought to be considered,” he urges, “ particularly with regard to the younger of both sexes, that, in the theatre, their minds must insensi-

bly acquire an inclination to romance and extravagance, and be unfitted for the sober and serious affairs of common life. Common or little things, give no entertainment upon the stage, except when they are ridiculed. There must always be something grand, surprising, and striking. In comedies, when all obstacles are removed, and the marriage is agreed on, the play is done. This gives the mind such a turn, that it is apt to despise ordinary business as mean, or deride it as ridiculous. Ask a merchant whether he chooses that his apprentices should go to learn exactness and frugality from the stage; or whether he expects the most punctual payments from those whose generosity is strengthened there, by weeping over virtue in distress. Suppose a matron coming home from the theatre filled with the ideas that are there impressed upon the imagination; how low and contemptible do all the affairs of her family appear, and how much must she be disposed (besides the time already consumed) to forget or misguide them?" It is impracticable, in this place, to afford a clear view of this powerful performance; but his remarks respecting the terms and allusions which pain the ear of modesty, pronounced and exhibited in a way to give additional force to the evil, and coolly and systematically listened to by virtuous females, cannot be omitted: "And where can plays be found, at least comedies, that are free from impurity, either directly, or by allusion and double meaning? It is amazing to think, that women who pretend to decency and reputation, whose brightest ornament ought to be modesty, should continue to abet, by their presence, so much unchastity as is to be found in the theatre. How few plays are acted, which a modest woman can see, consistently with decency, in every part? The power of custom and fashion is very great, in making people blind to the most manifest qualities and tendencies of things. There are ladies who frequently attend the stage, who, if they were but

once entertained with the same images in a private family, with which they are often presented there, would rise with indignation, and reckon their reputation ruined if ever they should return. I pretend to no knowledge of these things except from printed accounts, and the public bills of what plays are to be acted, and yet may safely affirm, that no woman of reputation, (as it is called in the world,) much less of piety, who has been ten times in a play-house, durst repeat in company all that she has heard there. With what consistency they gravely return to the same schools of lowdness, they themselves best know." Many of those who conscientiously believe, that the stage is "a warm incentive to virtue, and powerful preservative against vice," would, if sufficient care were taken to comprehend all the reasoning employed, find their opinions materially shaken by the irresistible force of the arguments to prove, that contributing to support a public theatre is inconsistent with the character of a christian.

His sermon entitled "The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men," preached at Princeton on the seventeenth of May, 1776; his treatises on "Justification by free grace, through Jesus Christ," and on "The nature and necessity of Regeneration;" and his remarks on "The importance of truth in Religion," or "The connexion that subsists between sound principles and a holy practice;" are not surpassed by any theological writings in the English language. His farewell sermon, delivered at Paisley in May, 1776, and his Lectures on Divinity, bear the same impress of a gigantic mind. The "Essay on the nature, value, and uses of money," already adverted to, comprised the substance of the speeches he had delivered in congress on this important and intricate question; and is, without dispute, the best that ever appeared in this country, and was eminently successful in the develop-

mept of that intricate subject. The *Druid's* series of periodical essays, published by him in the year 1781, is particularly useful and interesting: the principal themes of this series are literature and morals, arts and industry; the philosophy of human nature and of human life. In the preface he admirably ridicules the delightful themes of love and gallantry, which his younger readers might wish him to expatiate upon: "but," he says, "I do not take myself to be qualified to paint the ardours of a glowing flame. I have not seen any killing eyes these several years. It was but yesterday that I smiled involuntarily, on reading a poem in your last magazine, setting forth that both Beauty and Wisdom had taken up their residence with a certain youth, the one in her cheek, the other in her tongue, and that they were resolved never to depart; which I thought was a little unfortunate for all the rest of the sex. I wish every Stephen and Daphne heartily well, and that the exalted and rapturous praises of Arcadia may be soon brought down to the composed discourse of a quiet man and wife in Philadelphia." The fifth, sixth, and seventh numbers of these entertaining papers, are devoted to observations on the then state of the English language in America, and a classification of the principal prevalent improprieties.

His "Lectures on Moral Philosophy," notwithstanding they assume the form of regular discourses, were in fact considered by him as little more than a syllabus or compendium, on which he might enlarge before a class at the time of recitation: thus, he once compelled a printer, who, without his knowledge, had undertaken to publish them, to desist from the design. Not a few, however, whose eminence in literature and distinction in society, entitle their opinions to great consideration, have maintained that these lectures, with all their imperfections, contain one of the best and most perspi-

cnous exhibitions of the radical principles of the science on which they treat, that has ever been made. The surprising resemblance which exists between his "Lectures on Eloquence," and those of Dr. Blair, both pursuing the same track, is a striking example of the effect of early instruction on the habits of thought in later life. These eminent men were classmates under the same teacher, but no communications on the subject had ever been exchanged ; yet the radical ideas, but not the style, are remarkably the same.

Dr. Witherspoon was a frequent contributor to the public papers, particularly on political subjects. His "Thoughts on American Liberty, written at the dawn of the revolution, depict in striking colours the depth of his political foresight, by the recommendation of a series of important measures, almost all of which were subsequently adopted, at various periods. In the essay "On conducting the American controversy," his ideas are not less lucid than sagacious : and his remarks "On the Contest between Great Britain and America" tend to establish the fact, that the people of America, so far from being seditious and factious, entertained a strong attachment to the mother country, and attached high feelings of pride to their descent ; so much so, indeed, that when an American spoke of going to England, he always called it going home. In a communication to the editor of the Scots Magazine, on the "Ignorance of the British with respect to America," he elucidates the subject in a masterly manner, and concludes with the following fact : Some years ago, a frigate came from England, with despatches for many or most of the governors of provinces in North America. The captain had orders to go first to New York, and from thence to proceed to Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys. When he arrived at New York, he delivered his despatches there, and mentioned his orders.

The governor told him, "If you will give me the letters to the governors of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, I will order take to have them delivered in forty-eight hours; but if you take the route prescribed to you, perhaps they will not receive them in three months." To which the captain replied, "I do not care a farthing about the matter. I will stick to my instructions."

But the talents of Dr. Witherspoon were various: he was not only a serious writer, but he possessed a fund of refined wit and delicate satire. A happy specimen of this is found in the "Ecclesiastical Characteristics, or the Anatomy of Church Policy, being an humble attempt to open the Mystery of Moderation." The edge of his wit, in this performance, was directed against certain corruptions in principle and practice, prevalent in the church of Scotland; and no attack was ever made upon them which inflicted so deep a wound, or was so severely felt. It lighted up a greater fire than was ever before kindled in the church. The keenness and severity with which he exposed false principles to the scorn and derision of the public, excited the rage and fury of many ministers in Scotland. The most opprobrious epithets were bestowed upon the concealed author, and the most dreadful menaces uttered, in case they should be so fortunate as to discover and convict him. But the revilings of party spirit vanished like the morning mist before the beams of his eloquence, the force of his arguments, and the irresistibility of his deductions, contained in the "Serious Apology for the Ecclesiastical Characteristics," and his "Defence in the Synod of Glasgow." The ironical style which had been so pointedly attacked, he defended upon the basis of Holy Writ, and justified by the examples and commendations of the grave and venerable fathers of the church. But we cannot enter into details: his dexterity in

illustrating his position by pungent and amusing anecdotes, say, however, be noticed. In derision of the term *moderate* adopted by the other party, he introduced the following example: A certain minister, being asked the character of a friend of his, who had come up to the assembly, and particularly whether or not he was a *moderate man*? answered ‘*O yes! fierce for moderation.*’ Having been censured for want of tenderness towards the offenders, supposing the accusations to be true, and accused of injuring the cause of religion by inculcating a bad opinion of the clergy, which led men to infidelity, he indignantly rejected the propriety of covering their failings, and palliating their crimes, upon such shallow and indefensible principles. “I was never better pleased with a story,” said he, in exemplification of his argument, “than one I have read of the late duke of Orleans, regent of France. It happened, that during his regency, one of the French princes of the blood was convicted of committing robbery on the high-way. Great intercession was made with the regent to save him from the ignominy of a public execution, which, it was alleged, would be an indelible stain on the royal blood. To this the duke replied, ‘The royal blood is indeed deeply stained, but it was stained by the commission of the crime; the punishment will only serve to wash out the stain, as far as that is now possible.’” The style of the “Characteristics” was formed, as he acknowledged himself, upon that of Swift: but, while he rivalled the flowing wit, and caustic satire, he avoided the obscenity and levity, of that celebrated man. Many of the most eminent and respectable clergymen of the church of England gave evidence in favour of the publication. The bishop of London, after highly commending it, observed, “It appears only directed against a certain party in Scotland; but we have many in England to whom the characters are

very applicable. The bishop of Oxford, who held the same sentiments, he said that "he wished their own clergy would read it for their instruction and correction." Dr. Warburton, the celebrated bishop of Gloucester, mentions it with distinguished approbation, and particularly terms it "a fine piece of railery against a party to which we are no strangers here."

Dr. Witherspoon was not a man of the most various and extensive learning. His intellectual treasures consisted of a mass of information well selected and thoroughly digested; and scarcely any individual of the age had a more vigorous mind, or sound understanding. He was well versed in the dead languages, being an accurate Latin scholar, and capable of speaking and reading that language with facility. He was a good proficient in Greek; presiding over the Greek recitations in Longinus, and the higher classics; and he taught Hebrew to all those in the college who wished to study it. He also read and spoke the French language with accuracy and fluency. Although not a mathematician in detail, he had the highest idea of the usefulness and necessity of mathematical knowledge. He banished systems of logic altogether from the college, observing that Euclid's Elements were the best system of logic ever written. He was not versed in the details of Natural Philosophy and the Natural Sciences, of which he had learned only the general principles in the usual course of university education. Although not an indiscriminate and enormous reader, he had read, and thoroughly digested, the best authors in every department of useful knowledge. It may be mentioned as an evidence of his general reading, that Leonidas, a poem not universally admired, was one among the works which he had perused, and he remarked that he thereby prevented very embarrassing feelings when in company with Mr. Glover, the author of

poem, in Europe. His extensive knowledge of books led him to form an excellent list for a clergyman's library. His epistolary writings were extremely limited, and of his letters only are extant.

His eloquence of Dr. Witherspoon was simple and grave, at the same time, as animated as his constitutional malady would permit. It was a kind of Demosthenian eloquence, which made the blood "shiver along the arteries:" he could speak in a loud tone of voice, but his articulation was such that it was distinctly audible in the largest church. His discourses commanded universal attention, and his manner was altogether irresistible: he never indulged in florid displays of fancy, but modelled his oratory according to the plain and comprehensive style of Swift. He was fond of natural horticulture, and valued himself upon the arrangement of his kitchen garden: a lady, once walking with him through it, observed that he had an excellent garden, but no orators; "No, madam," said he, "neither in my garden, nor in my discourse." Another distinguishing feature was his almost intuitive discernment of character: no man could long be in his company without being known. No rogue, no suppressed facts, could escape him; no chicanery could elude him; he pierced through every thing as if by intuition.

He possessed another excellent quality, in a remarkable degree; his attention to young persons. He never suffered an opportunity to escape of imparting to them the most useful advice; and he performed this favour in a manner so reasonable, that they could neither be inattentive to it, nor neglect it. He was peculiarly cautious of flattering, and avoided slander so scrupulously, that when injured by any person, it was impossible, by every effort, to persuade him publicly to say one word in his disfavour. Through the whole course of a long life, he uniformly observed order and

regularity in the transaction of business, whether secular or spiritual; and he regarded the malice of the world with that pity and unconcern which result from a benevolent mind and an approving conscience. "Few persons," he remarked, "have been less concerned than I have been, through life, to contradict false accusations, from an opinion which I formed early, and which has been confirmed by experience, that there is scarcely any thing more harmless than political or party malice. It is best to leave it to itself: opposition and contradiction are the only means of giving it life or duration."

Possessing remarkable frankness of character, Dr. Witherspoon, in his moments of relaxation from the great and serious affairs of life, was an amusing and instructive companion. His rich fund of anecdote was improved by an abundant share of wit; but he was far from affecting the character of the latter, and used it with the utmost discretion. The following anecdote presents a specimen of his good-humoured wit. When Burgoyne's army was captured at Saratoga, general Gates despatched one of his aids to congress to carry the intelligence. The officer, after being delayed by the amusements which offered themselves on his way, at length arrived at Philadelphia, but the report of the victory had reached there several days before. Congress, according to custom, proceeded to give the messenger some mark of their esteem. It was proposed to present him with an elegant sword; but Dr. Witherspoon rose, and begged leave to move, that instead of a sword, they should present him with *a pair of golden spurs*.—The "*Ecclesiastical Characteristics*," as we have already observed, abound in brilliant scintillations of wit; and the hypothetical "*Supplication of J. R. * * **" is a master-piece of the most biting satire, and sarcastic frolics of fancy. This Rivington was the printer in New York, devoted to the cause of the enemy, already men-

tioned. Dr. Witherspoon, in his supposed petition to congress, soliciting protection, after the evacuation of the city, from the resentment of the whigs, presents, with irresistible humour, a catalogue of his crimes, all satirically set forth as claims upon the mercy and forgiveness of the nation. Falsehood and misrepresentation had been resorted to by this man, in every possible shape that could be thought of: the British general Robertson once told him in his office, that "he had carried things so far, that people could not believe one word he said, even though it were as true as gospel."

Dr. Witherspoon was an affectionate husband, a tender parent, a kind master, and a cordial friend. He was twice married. He was united to his first wife, named Montgomery, in Scotland, at an early age: she was an excellent woman, without much education, but eminent for her piety and benevolence. His children, at the period of his emigration to America, consisted of three sons and two daughters; James, the eldest son, held the rank of major in the revolutionary army, and was killed at the battle of Germantown. John possessed good talents and attainments, and was bred a physician. David applied himself to the study of the law, and settled in North Carolina, where he became a respectable practitioner. In the year 1780, he acted as private secretary to the president of congress. Ann, the oldest daughter, was married to the Rev. Dr. Samuel S. Smith, who succeeded Dr. Witherspoon as president of the college; and Frances entered into matrimony with Dr. David Ramsay, the celebrated historian. His second marriage excited much noise and attention, he being at that time seventy, and his wife only twenty-three, years of age. Excepting Washington, he is said to have possessed more of what is called *presence*, than almost any other man: he was six feet in height, finely proportioned, and remarkably dignified in his appear-

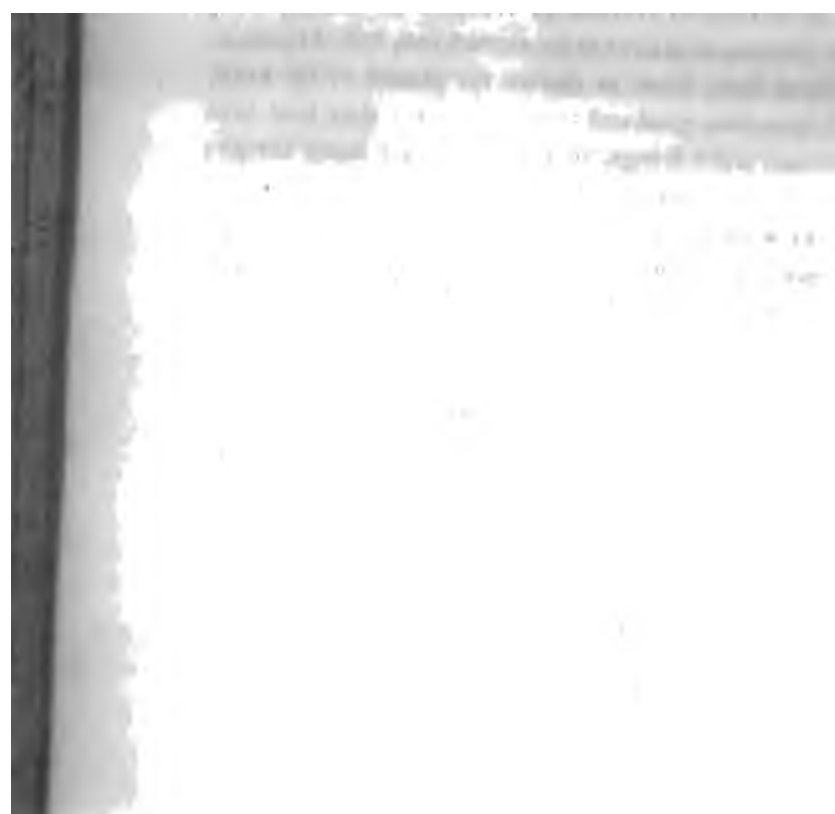
ance. It was difficult to trifle in his presence ; a circumstance which proved highly useful in the government of the college, by abashing the impudent and presuming. He had a pretty strong Scottish accent, which, however, continued to decrease till the day of his death.

The memory of this eminent man is not forgotten in the land of his birth : in the country which he contributed to create, it can perish only with its liberties, and the overthrow of those principles which are inscribed on the charter of independence. At a public dinner given to the Rev. Dr. Chalmers, in Glasgow, on the eleventh of November, 1823, the following toast was proposed ; "Health to Professor Chase, and prosperity to the rising literature of America." Mr. Chase, after suitable acknowledgments, adverted to the many natives of Scotland, eminent for piety and erudition, who had taught in the seminaries of America. "To mention but a single instance," he continued, "the memory of Witherspoon is embalmed in every American heart. The traveller pauses amidst the shades of Princeton college ; he stands at the foot of the grave where Witherspoon sleeps by the side of Findley, and Davis, and Edwards, and the other men of kindred spirit, who, in their day, presided and taught in that college ; and while he thinks of his distinguished zeal and services, he blesses the land that gave him birth, and the university that trained him for so much usefulness."

Bodily infirmities began, at length, to fall heavily upon him. For more than two years previous to his death, he was afflicted with the loss of sight : which contributed to hasten the progress of his other disorders. He bore his sufferings with exemplary patience, and even cheerfulness ; nor would his active mind, and his unabated desire of usefulness, permit him, even in this situation, to desist from his ministry, and his duties in the college, so far as his health and strength

would admit. During his blindness, he was frequently led into the pulpit, both at home and abroad ; and always acquitted himself with his usual accuracy, and not unfrequently with more than his usual solemnity and animation.

On the fifteenth of November, 1794, in the seventy-third year of his age, he retired to his eternal rest, full of honours, and full of days, there to receive the plaudit of his Lord, "well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, be thou ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." His remains were interred at Princeton, and a Latin epitaph, which will be found in the Appendix, commemorating his virtues, and the prominent incidents of his life, is inscribed upon his tomb.



Mrs. Hopkinson was esteemed a woman of more than common sagacity and penetration, and, naturally enough, was quick to discover those early indications of genius in her son, which she fondly, but not vainly hoped would, in their full maturity, cast a lustre upon his life, and perhaps confer honour upon his country. They were, at all events, sufficiently striking to warrant the sanguine expectations of a fond mother, to quicken her parental solicitude, and to animate her exertions for their improvement. Her son Francis was, of course, the first object of her hopes and cares; the immediate representative of his father, and as she fondly expected, the inheritor of his peculiar talents, she resolved that nothing in her power should be wanting that could render him capable of unfolding them with advantage and success. To the aid of the boy's genius, and of the talents derived from his father, this exemplary matron brought every assistance that could be derived from her admirable precepts, enforced by her own excellent example; and relinquishing for this most sacred purpose, every enjoyment and every pursuit which was not recommended to her judgment by its direct tendency to the accomplishment of this, her most delightful duty, she never suffered her attention to relax till, with his manners softened by the purest moral habits, and his virtues fenced in from every attack by strict religious instruction, she transferred his literary education to the college of Philadelphia, afterwards the "University of Pennsylvania," in the first class of which he graduated, and from which he was removed to the study of the law, under an able professor of that science.

His attainments as a lawyer were great, and could have only been acquired by studious application to the volumes of jurisprudence; but this did not prevent him from warm devotion to the lighter accomplishments, which a natu-

ral taste, peculiarly adapted to such things, induced him to cultivate; and while he stored his mind with the more grave and important knowledge necessary for advancing in his profession, he by no means neglected those embellishments which were better calculated, not only to gratify his own fancy, but to captivate the general circle of society. His talents ample, quick, and versatile, and his powers readily adapted to the acquisition and digestion of any and every art and science, grasped with avidity whatever was presented to them, and made them their own; for it appears from the accounts given of him by Dr. Benjamin Rush, one of the most sagacious and discriminating of his contemporaries, who for the greater part of his life was personally acquainted with him, that "he excelled in music and poetry, and had some knowledge in painting. These arts, however," he continues, "did not monopolize all the powers of his mind; he was well skilled in many practical and useful sciences, particularly mathematics and natural philosophy, and he had a general acquaintance with the principles of anatomy, chemistry, and natural history. But his forte was humour and satire, in both of which he was not surpassed by Lucian, Swift, or Rabelais. These extraordinary powers were consecrated to the advancement of the interests of patriotism, virtue, and science."

In the year 1766, Mr. Hopkinson determined to pay a visit to the land of his forefathers, and before his departure from his native city, received a tribute to his excellence and worth, not often bestowed, and singularly honourable to him. We have already mentioned that his education was completed in the college of Philadelphia, and it is among the records of a public commencement of that institution, held on the twentieth of May, 1766, that the board of trustees, comprising the governor, chief justice and most distinguished men of the province, passed the following resolution. "After the busi-

ness of the commencement was finished, it was resolved, that as Francis Hopkinson (who was the first scholar entered in this seminary at its opening, and likewise, one of the first who received a degree in it,) was about to embark for England, and has always done honour to the place of his education, by his abilities and good morals, as well as rendered it many substantial services on all public occasions, the thanks of this institution ought to be delivered to him in the most affectionate and respectful manner ; and Mr. Stedman and the provost are desired to communicate the same to Mr. Hopkinson accordingly, and wish him a safe and prosperous voyage."

He remained in England upwards of two years, dividing his time between his relations, alternately in the vast metropolis of London, and the delightful vales of Worcestershire, and on his return to America, about the year 1768, married Miss Ann Borden, of Bordentown, in the state of New Jersey. In consequence of this connexion, the sphere of his domestic exertions and enjoyments was soon enlarged by the rapid increase of his family, in whom it was his care to instil the inestimable precepts which he had himself imbibed from the instruction and example of his venerable mother. In this state of patriarchal felicity, imparting happiness to his children and household, he continued for some time receiving also the public acknowledgment of his worth and services by appointments to the offices of collector of customs and executive counsellor under the royal government ; his commission to the last office, bearing the signature of king George the third, but a few years before the revolution, is still in the possession of his family.

He was not, however, permitted long to pursue undisturbed, either the professional occupations of his private life, or the public duties of the offices which had been conferred on

him ; both were invaded by the unjustifiable encroachments of the British government ; and both he was obliged to sacrifice in the cause of his country. Had his feelings permitted it, he would not have been allowed to remain a quiet spectator of the contest ; for his character for abilities and patriotism pointed him out to his countrymen, in a peculiar degree, as one in whom their confidence ought to be reposed in the most trying exigencies of their affairs. He was conspicuous in all the public measures which preceded the revolutionary contest, and in the year 1776 was chosen by the state of New Jersey as one of her representatives in congress ; in this capacity he voted for and subscribed the ever memorable Declaration of Independence.

Nor was it in his own state only, that this esteem and confidence in him existed ; the state of Pennsylvania, of which indeed he was a native, but where he had in a great degree ceased to reside, sought his public services, even whilst he held his appointment under New Jersey. Mr. Ross the judge of the admiralty having retired from office, the president of Pennsylvania wrote to Mr. Hopkinson on the fourteenth of July, 1779, requesting permission to nominate him as his successor ; receiving his consent, the appointment was unanimously made two days after, and he held it with high credit to himself and benefit to the country, for ten years, until the organization of the federal government.

Upon this event of course the office which Mr. Hopkinson held, expired ; but general Washington had scarcely entered upon his duties as president of the United States, under the new constitution, when he addressed him a letter not only honourable to him, but in itself one of the noblest testimonies perhaps ever given to the public, of the perfect purity and noble motives which governed every official action of that

distinguished man. It has never yet been published, and is in the following terms :—

“ Sir, I have the pleasure to enclose to you a commission as judge of the United States for the district of Pennsylvania, to which office I have nominated, and with the advice and consent of the senate have appointed you. In my nomination of persons to fill offices in the judicial department, I have been guided by the importance of the object. Considering it as of the first magnitude, and as the pillar upon which our political fabric must rest, I have endeavoured to bring into the high offices of its administration such characters as will give stability and dignity to our national government; and I persuade myself they will discover a due desire to promote the happiness of our country, by a ready acceptance of their several appointments. The laws which have passed relative to your office accompany the commission.”

This letter may be regarded as a lesson to all, on whom the institutions of our republic have conferred the right of filling the offices of justice. It may be regarded as far more than an expression of kindness and esteem entertained by its illustrious author, to one who had toiled with him in the same good cause—the cause of his country’s prosperity. It is peculiarly the fashion of the present time, to quote and rely on the opinions of the great fathers of the nation. This indeed has been sometimes, of late, carried to an unjustifiable extent, for even the momentary expressions of conversation, the hasty sentiments of private and careless correspondence, are repeated, and, connected as they are with our feelings of veneration and gratitude, they have become in a degree commentaries of no ordinary weight on our institutions, on individual character, and on the public measures of the nation. With regard however to this document, but one opinion can prevail, it is among the most valuable

legacies of him, whose singular fortune it seems to be, to receive even greater gratitude and honour by the accidental discharges which are every year made of some new circumstances out of secret violence, than by the most conspicuous events which marked his glorious career while living. It is a practical interpretation of the admirable theory of the constitution, calculated, beyond almost every other, to secure its benefits and maintain its existence. In that compact, a new feature was introduced into British government, by which a power was created, in some respects subordinate, but in others, even superior to the legislative and executive branches; a power which, going back to the people, the great fountain of all government, was authorised to control even their representatives, when they ventured to misplace the trust which had been delegated to them. To discharge so high a duty, required, and ever will require, a union of qualities greater than that demanded by most public stations in the republic—knowledge, which has learnt and deeply weighed the complicated principles blended in the formation of the government; talent, to perceive the remote consequences of rules which may be far different from their immediate result; patriotism, never to lose sight of the great ends for which all laws have been made; moderation, properly to temper conflicting interests and prejudices, and to overcome the momentary excitement, attendant on all public events; and firmness, to sacrifice all that is personal, all that is dependent on temporary favour and popularity, for the great objects of truth and justice. They, therefore, on whom the country has conferred the honour of selecting those who are to fill such stations, should recollect how responsible is the duty, how scrupulous should be their choice, how much of future prosperity, nay of national and individual happiness, depends upon their conduct. This

letter of Washington should be their guide in every instance, it will secure them, as it has done him, the lasting gratitude of their country, when the instigation and result of mere party feeling shall have been long forgotten, or remembered only to be regretted and despised.

While Mr. Hopkinson held his judicial offices, he avoided, properly, all minute interference in party or occasional politics, though he was always active and useful when he deemed his services necessary to the public good. His favourite instrument, on such occasions, had always been the lively vein of satire, which, as we have already mentioned, he possessed in an uncommon degree. As early as the year 1774, he had commenced this species of hostility on the common enemy, the British, by an ingenious production which he called "A pretty story." In this, by a pleasant *allegory*, he represented some of the many grievances the colonies laboured under, previous to the revolution, and which shortly after occasioned their disunion from the empire. As the piece was precisely adapted to the feelings of the times, and contained statements of incontrovertible facts, conveyed in a lively and humorous form, it was sought after with avidity, and read with approbation by every class of the community. It would seem as if our author was aware that but a very inconsiderable portion of any people is capable of feeling, or exactly comprehending an insult or injury offered to the public at large, and the number is still more inconsiderable, who view it as a personal injury, and as such think it the duty of individuals to resent it; but that if the community is represented as an individual, it awakens sympathy and alarms to danger, because every man knows that he is liable to the same oppression, and viewing it with a jealous eye, feels an honest indignation at that which would otherwise have scarcely produced the least emotion in his temper.

In the intervals between the years 1785 and 1781, the representations in the daily papers frequently called aloud for public contradiction, and their untemperable tones demanded refutation, while the feelings of the people (agitated by their sufferings) required to be strongly excited by a frequent remembrance of their injuries. At this period Mr. Hopkinson not only contributed largely, in a general way, to the support of the cause in which he had embarked, his fortification by the elegance and politeness of his writings corrected in a great measure the gross scurrility that infected the press. His letters to James Rivington, printer of the Royal Gazette, at New York; his epistle to Lord Howe; his two Letters by a Tory; his translation of a Letter written by a Foreigner on his Travels; his Political Catechism, and several other pieces, were written during this period, and had a great tendency to the completion of this object. The last of these is called "The New Model," a pleasing little allegory, containing, in substance, the principal arguments used in the convention of Pennsylvania assembled in 1778, to consider the frame of government for the United States, drawn up by the general convention of the United States, and by them recommended to the people at large. It is upon this piece Dr. Rush observed, that it "must last as long as the citizens of the United States continue to admire, and to be happy under the present national government."

After the peace with Great Britain, party spirit rose to such a height in Pennsylvania, that in many instances private friendship yielded to political animosity. During the administration of president Dickinson, this political madness was perhaps more ungovernable than it had been at any time since that period: with a view to check the evil consequences attendant upon such violent proceedings, Mr. Hopkinson published "A full and true account of a violent uproar which

ly happened in a very eminent family." In this tract, which is also allegorical, he has represented the political contentions that then agitated Pennsylvania, and placed those persons who were at the head of the administration in a ridiculous light. This essay contains much of the satire and diabolical humour of Mr. Hopkinson.

He wrote several other essays, arising in political dissensions, but which, being founded on no important transaction of the state, and turning chiefly upon personal ridicule, have much of their interest: one, however, deserves to be particularized, being distinguished for the severe pungency of its satire, and bears the title of "A Specimen of a modern lawsuit;" this is a piece of admirable humour; the objects of its ridicule could not be mistaken; the manners of the lawyers, and the learned counsel engaged to argue the important cause between Laurence Landlord and Timothy Tenant, are sketched to nature; and the dramatic form in which the story is reported, conveys us immediately to a court of justice, and makes the humour irresistible to any person acquainted with legal proceedings.

A long and malicious contest in the public prints, gave rise to a humorous proposal of Mr. Hopkinson to establish a new court of justice, under the name of the "High Court of our," which was successful in putting an end to that lasting altercation. Following up the idea the next year, he published a humorous account of an imaginary cause conducted in this court, which gave occasion to the following singular anecdote as related by himself—"The piece had been enclosed in a cover addressed to James Wilson, for whom it had been designed, and sent to his house. Mr. Wilson not being at home, his servant received the packet, stuck it behind the parlour looking-glass. A captain * *, who was frequently deranged in his mind, and at such

times full of notions of plots and conspiracies, went into Mr. Wilson's parlour without knocking, when none of the family happened to be there, and seeing the packet in the frame of the looking-glass, took it down and went off with it. There was, at this time, a cause agitated in the supreme court of great popular attention, in which Mr. Wilson and most of the gentlemen of the bar were engaged. The next day I went into court, and happening to be seated near Mr. Wilson, I asked him if he had received my packet; he told me he did not get home till late in the evening; that the servant informed him there had been a letter for him, and that he had put it behind the glass; but that it had all at once disappeared, and nobody could give any account of it, although inquiry had been made through the whole family. Whilst we were thus talking, a cry of "make way there," was heard in the court, when captain * * * * pushing his way through the crowd, appeared before the bar with papers in his hand. He interrupted the lawyer who was then speaking, and informed the judges that he had papers in his hand which would immediately clear up, and determine the cause before the court; and that he had also discovered a most horrible and dangerous plot, partly against the state, and partly against the judge of the admiralty; confessing that he had made this great discovery by breaking into and robbing that gentleman's house, pointing to Mr. Wilson, declaring that so far as he was amenable for the robbery, he stood ready to submit to the law. The papers, which I immediately knew to be mine, were handed up to the bench, and the chief justice was preparing to read the contents aloud to the court; but I forced my way up to him, and whispered him, that it was only a piece of literary sport between Mr. Wilson and me, and very unfit for the public ear on such an occasion. The papers

were then delivered to Mr. Wilson, and the audience assured that they did not concern the present cause."

Among the politer writings of Mr. Hopkinson, is the Essay on White-washing. This has been frequently reprinted in different periodical journals, not only in America, but in England, and the humour still remains as excellent as it was at the time of its first publication. How it came to be inserted in Dr. Franklin's works, we have yet to learn.

Of his poetry, the greatest praise which can justly be bestowed upon it, seems to be that the versification is easy, but that the subjects upon which it was employed, being generally occasional, it cannot afford much interest beyond the immediate circle acquainted with the facts. The humorous ballad called the Battle of the Kegs, was very popular at the time of its publication, and still retains its station among poems of this description; Mr. Hopkinson, indeed, is better known by this, than all his other poems; his *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* too are imitations so graphic and agreeable, that they might be quoted throughout with satisfaction and confidence. The vivid loyalty which glows in his rhymes on the accession of George III. and the victories and glories of *Britannia*, before the stamp act, when contrasted with the tenour of his writings and the nature of his feelings, after the British ministry entered upon schemes of taxation and coercion, may be cited as an example of the rapidity and completeness of their alterative effect, upon the tone and temper of the colonists. His larger pieces, are "The Treaty, a Poem," which, according to the author's own words, was written on the banks of the Lehigh, in the year 1761, when he served as secretary in a solemn conference held between the government of Pennsylvania, and the chiefs of several Indian nations; and "Science, a Poem," written in the course of the following year. These essays are neither deficient in harmony of numbers, nor in

neatness of expression, and several detached passages are highly poetical. Taken as a whole, however, they excite at this day but little interest ; and as critics will admit of nothing descending to mediocrity, these verses will seldom receive a second perusal, and that only by the curious in literature. Yet it would be unjust to condemn him for a failure in poetry, although he cannot be applauded for success. His poems were only intended to amuse, for a moment, the immediate circle of his acquaintance, and they were possessed of sufficient merit to entitle them to that attention : he therefore attained his object ; humble, it must be admitted, but it would be absurd to condemn an architect for not erecting a splendid palace, when he only prepared his materials to build a summer-house.

These various labours of Mr. Hopkinson, both as a public servant, and a lively and useful man of letters, had been rewarded with many plentiful harvests of well earned fame, but his death was at last premature to himself, his friends and his country. Though subject for some time to frequent attacks of gout in his head, he had latterly enjoyed a considerable respite from them. On Sunday evening, however, being the eighth of May, 1791, he was somewhat indisposed, and passed a restless night after he went to bed. He rose the next morning as early as usual, and breakfasted with the family. At seven o'clock he was seized with an apoplectic fit, which in two hours put a period to his existence, in the fifty-third year of his age.

This memoir cannot be properly closed, without recording such particulars as we have been able to obtain relative to the person and private character of Mr. Hopkinson. These are derived chiefly from his eloquent friend and biographer Dr. Rush, to whom we have already alluded, and to the recollections of those yet living, who have been amused by the sallies

of his wit, and enjoyed the benefit of his association, and the pleasures of his friendship.

His person was a little below the common size. His features were small, but extremely animated. His speech was quick, and all his motions seemed to partake of the unceasing activity and versatility of the powers of his mind. His disposition and demeanour were marked by benignity and kindness, and the following anecdote will be deemed rather apposite and affecting than trivial, since it displays them in so amiable a light. He was accustomed to cherish an acquaintance with a little mouse, which would come from its hiding place and sit by him at his meals, in order to receive the crumbs with which its boldness was plentifully rewarded. His pigeons also became so much attached to him, from his constant attention to them, that, when he walked in the yard, they would alight on his person, and contend for a place, crowding upon his head, shoulders, arms, and indeed wherever they could rest.

He was always distinguished as a man of great taste, fond of science, when he had leisure to devote himself to it, and acute and clear in his professional exertions. His skill in music was considerable, and the airs which he composed for his own songs rendered them doubly popular. At a time when the rudeness and poverty of the country permitted few to devote themselves to the cultivation of the arts, Mr. Hopkinson gave to them all the attention which it was possible to bestow ; his opinion on such matters was always sought after and regarded, and when he made his voyage to Europe, those of his friends whose fortunes and tastes allowed it, committed to him the selection of such works of art as he might approve. In addition to a well filled library, embracing the best literature of the times, he possessed a collection of scientific apparatus, and had considerable reputation as an experimental

philosopher. The following anecdote illustrates this trait in his character. During the revolutionary war, a party of Hessians invaded Bordentown so suddenly, that Mr. Hopkinson's family had barely time to escape, leaving their house and all it contained a prey to the invaders. After the retreat of the British from Philadelphia in 1778, a volume was brought to Mr. Hopkinson which a Hessian officer had left behind him at his lodgings ; it was a book that had belonged to his library at Bordentown, and on a blank page the officer had written in German, " that he had taken the volume from the library of Mr. Hopkinson, who was a violent and uncompromising rebel ; but that from the books and philosophical apparatus in the room, he was certainly a man of learning and science." While a student of law, the gaiety of his disposition, his turn for poetry, and his fondness for general letters, prevented his exclusive application to a drier study, but he was intelligent and acute, and obtained considerable legal information ; his reputation as an advocate was high while he continued at the bar, and in the judicial offices which he held, he conducted himself with much ability and the highest integrity.

But the peculiar trait of his character was that to which we have already alluded—his satire and wit, for it may be safely said that the various causes which contributed to the establishment of the independence and federal government of the United States, will not be fully traced, unless much is ascribed to the irresistible influence of the ridicule which he poured forth, from time to time, upon the enemies of those great political events. Newspaper scandal, too, frequently for months together, disappeared or languished, after the publication of several of his irresistible satires upon that disgraceful species of writing. He gave a currency to a thought or phrase, in these effusions from his pen, which never failed

to bear down the spirit of the times, and frequently to turn the divided tides of party rage into one general channel of ridicule or contempt. Sometimes he employed his formidable powers of humour and satire in exposing the absurd formalities of technical science. He thought much, and thought justly, upon the subject of education. He often ridiculed, in conversation, the ordinary mode of teaching children the English language. He considered many of the years which are spent in learning the Latin and Greek languages as lost, and he held several of the arts and sciences which were then taught in our colleges, in great contempt. His specimen of modern learning, in a tedious examination, the only object of which was to describe the properties of a "salt-box," originally published in the American Museum for February 1787, but afterwards attributed to the celebrated English professor Porson, will always be relished as a morsel of exquisite humour, while the absurd modes of education there alluded to continue to be practised.

Mr. Hopkinson possessed uncommon talents for pleasing in company. His wit was not of that coarse kind which was calculated to "set the table in a roar." It was mild and elegant, and infused cheerfulness, and a species of delicate joy, rather than mirth, into the hearts of all who heard it. His empire over the attention and passions of his company was not purchased at the expense of innocence. They who have passed many delightful hours in his society, declare that he was never once heard to use a profane expression, nor utter a word that would have made a lady blush, or have clouded her countenance for a moment with a look of disapprobation. It is this species of wit alone that indicates a rich and powerful imagination, while that which is tinctured with profanity, or indelicacy, argues poverty of genius, inasmuch as they have both been considered, very properly, as the cheapest products of the mind.

Mr. Hopkinson left behind him at his death, a widow, who has but lately paid the debt of nature, and five children, two sons and three daughters. Of these the eldest, Joseph Hopkinson, is well known as the distinguished successor to his father's talents and honours, uniting the same quickness and brilliancy of genius, the same taste and fondness for the arts, with superior success as an advocate at the bar, and an orator in the public councils of the nation.

JOHN HART.

If those who administered the British government in the early part of the reign of George the third had been well informed of the real character of that party in the colonies, which opposed their pretensions to the exercise of unlimited power, they would have seen the impracticability of their scheme, if they had not been convinced of its injustice.

They were not aware that prudent and unambitious men—established land-holders, deeply interested in the preservation of tranquillity—had rallied round that standard of resistance which they supposed to be supported only by needy adventurers, or noisy demagogues, to whom any change might bring an improvement of condition.

A cause thus sustained could only be overthrown by the devastation of the whole country. The determined resistance of the most intelligent and disinterested part of a whole community could not be overcome unless by such extensive destruction and ruin as was not in the contemplation of the ministry or the parliament.

One of the patriots that voluntarily incurred the greatest degree of suffering, without the possibility of any individual gain, was JOHN HART, a member of that congress which issued the memorable Declaration of Independence.

He was the son of Edward Hart, of Hopewell township and Hunterdon county in New Jersey, from whom he inherited a considerable patrimonial estate, and a spirit that would have been worthy of the best days of ancient Rome.

During the war with France, Edward Hart was one of those brave and loyal colonists who generously lent their aid to the military operations of England :—aid that was gladly received and emphatically acknowledged, but never recompensed, by the royal government. He exerted himself in the cause of the mother country, so far as to raise a corps of volunteers, called the Jersey Blues ; a name that they first bore, but which has become a favourite military designation since that period. With this corps he marched into Canada, and arrived before Quebec in time to participate in the victory which closed the mortal career of general Wolfe.

John Hart, the son, did not join in these military expeditions, but was quietly cultivating a farm of four hundred acres, which he had purchased. He had married a lady of respectable connexions and great amiability of character, named Deborah Scudder, and was surrounded by a numerous family of sons and daughters. In the enjoyment, therefore, of domestic happiness, and engrossed by the cares of his farm, he felt no aspiration for martial fame, and was not particularly excited by the quarrel between France and England, in which the colonies took, generally, an active part.

He served, however, in the colonial assembly, and for twenty years assisted in the local legislation which was exercised for the improvement of the country, in the laying out of new roads, the erection of bridges, the founding of seminaries of education, and the provisions for administering justice. When the series of aggressions upon the rights of the colonies was commenced by the passage of the stamp act in the year 1765, he assisted in the selection of delegates ap-

pointed to represent New Jersey in the congress held at New York, in the month of October of that year ; and he was one of those who at once perceived the true nature of the dispute between the ministry of king George on the one side, and the people of the colonies on the other ; he saw clearly that the question at issue between them, involved nothing less than absolute slavery to the colonies, if they should submit to the novel pretensions of the British government.

Mr. Grenville, the prime minister, who led the way in that mad career which successive administrations were so unfortunate as to follow, in their blind determination to coerce the colonies into submission, did not probably comprehend the whole tendency of his own project. And it surprised many well disposed persons in Great Britain to see the Americans, after suffering so quietly all sorts of restrictions upon their trade and industry, avowedly imposed for the benefit of the mother country alone, now so greatly roused and excited by the mere anticipation of a trifling tax, which could not take from them, in half a century, more treasure than they would voluntarily throw away in a single campaign against the French and Canadians.

This erroneous view of the discontents was not uncommon, and the terror, grief and indignation caused by the threatened stamp duty, was attributed to a sordid apprehension of parting with an inconsiderable sum of money. The example of such men as John Hart should have been sufficient to prove the fallacy of such an imputation.

A farmer ! what had he to do with stamped paper ? He had no occasion to sign bills of exchange or promissory notes. Far advanced in years ! what improvement in his condition could he look for in civil strife and commotion ? Possessed only of a farm and farmer's stock ! what inducement of pecuniary saving could persuade him to join in measures that would

invite a hostile army, with devastation in its train, to make his fields the theatre of war ? Far different motives from the love of self could induce such men to assume an attitude of resistance against arbitrary power.

It has happened that in England the great contests for freedom, in which our ancestors were engaged, in opposition to the arbitrary pretensions of the crown, have turned chiefly on questions of taxation. It was not the amount, but the principle of the poll-tax, and the ship-money, that made those exactions so intolerably odious to the people of England. On this question of the right in the governing power to take the subject's money without his consent, the ablest pens and most eloquent tongues of Britain had been exercised ; it was the point which had been made the criterion of happiness, so far as happiness depends on freedom. The right to retain property, untaxed but by the consent of the people through their representatives, had become the sensible object in which civil liberty seemed to reside. And as these principles had been preserved unalloyed in America, since they had been brought in all their freshness to Plymouth-rock by the first pilgrims—to say that a free people might be taxed without their consent seemed to the colonists equivalent to the pretension that they might be chained, scourged and branded as the vilest slaves.

It is certain that at this early period independence was not thought of, or if suggested at all, was not in the least desired by the respectable and loyal subjects who assembled at New York in the autumn of 1765. But the congress of this year, faithful to the principles of the British constitution, as received and proclaimed by the best and bravest men in England, from the time of Magna Charta, unanimously declared, in reference to the stamp act, that taxation without representation would be intolerable tyranny.

The consequences of this assertion of a maxim so important in the relations between the colonies and the mother country, were of great moment to the interests of both. It roused the pride of the British aristocracy, while it excited also the attention of the colonists, and gave them a principle to contend for, which being approved by their understandings and impressed upon their hearts, became of dearer value than their money or their trade, their farms or their houses; all of which, as well as their peace and safety, were willingly sacrificed in their determination to maintain it.

The intelligence that was received early in the subsequent year, of the change of ministry; the dismissal of the duke of Bedford and Mr. Grenville; and the appointment of the amiable lord Rockingham as prime minister, together with the repeal of the odious stamp act, spread a heartfelt joy throughout the colonies; but confirmed the people in the belief that the congress at New York had asserted only what was just and undeniable.

The declaratory act of parliament, passed at the time of the repeal of the stamp act, as a salvo to the pride of those members who could not bear any seeming acquiescence in the claims of the colonies, was looked upon as an empty and unmeaning boast of power, while the actual repeal of the tax seemed a decisive and final renunciation of the scheme of oppression. The colonies were satisfied and happy, and John Hart was one of the most contented and unambitious farmers to be found in all his majesty's dominions.

It was a period of great simplicity in manners and very general purity of life, yet even then he had so conducted himself in his dealings among the people of New Jersey, as to have acquired the familiar designation of "honest John Hart." A distinction of which his descendants may be more reasonably proud than if his lot had been cast where he might

have acquired all the stars, crosses and garters, that royalty could bestow upon its favourites.

The even tenor of his life was interrupted by few incidents that would not appear trivial in narration. His farm grew yearly better in value and improvement, his stock increased, and his family was augmented by a biennial addition of a son or a daughter, until he was surrounded by thirteen children. In their education, together with the care of his farm, the exercise of friendly acts of assistance to his neighbours, and in serving brief tours of duty as a member of the colonial legislature, he found occupation of that enviable kind which, at once useful and tranquil, brings old age with no wrinkles but those which time has traced, and preserves for advanced years the cheerfulness of youth.

A course of life so peaceful and happy is not often destined to remain free from interruption. While every thing was proceeding in its regular course in the domestic circle of "honest John Hart," great events were occurring on the other side of the Atlantic, which were to reach, with a malignant influence, even to the calm retirement of the New Jersey farmer.

In 1767, Charles Townshend being elevated, unfortunately for the British empire, to the place of chancellor of the exchequer, brought forward his plan of revenue, including duties on glass, paper, pasteboard, painter's colours, and tea, imported into the colonies.

The generous confidence in which the colonists had reposed since the repeal of the stamp act, was now dispelled; they had trusted that the hateful project of imposing a badge of slavery upon them would not be revived, but the adoption by parliament of this new imposition, excited the most serious alarm and the gloomiest apprehensions.

John Hart, in the midst of his quiet comforts, appreciated the extent of the evil that impended. Valuing all the blessings which were his own, he felt that they might all be rendered valueless if he were to possess them but as the slave of a despotic master. The amount of tax that he would pay was not worth a thought; he had little occasion for English paper, pasteboard, glass, or paint; and tea was a luxury that hardly found its way to the tables of such plain country families as his.

But the sense of personal security and unalienable rights, the sturdy pride of freedom, which every Englishman of that day, and every inhabitant of the British colonies was accustomed to cherish as his birth-right—these were indispensable to him. Without these, all the advantages he possessed were of no avail—his riches might increase, his friends might multiply, his honours thicken upon him, his children might be all that his parental wishes could suggest—still if he might be taxed, to the value of a straw, by a parliament in which he had no share of actual or virtual representation, he could be no more than a slave. It was a noble sentiment which actuated such men to join in the plans of resistance—a sentiment alloyed by no hope of personal aggrandizement, excited by no restlessness of temper, fomented by no artful demagogues—but pure and disinterested, founded on a sincere belief of rights invaded, and leading to the most unbounded sacrifices.

It is known that the mode of opposition first adopted was an agreement to abstain from importing the articles which were made the subject of the duty; thus endeavouring to prevail on the British rulers to abandon the whole scheme of taxation, by convincing them of its being practically useless.

In this system Mr. Hart cordially joined, and gave it all the support and encouragement in his power.

This agreement was well observed in the colonies, and the duties, as a revenue measure, became entirely nugatory. Still, however, the ministers of the king did not take the hint from the spirit and determination shown by the colonies, until the year 1770, when lord North, having become premier by the death of the duke of Grafton, rescinded the duties on paper, glass and paint, retaining only that upon tea.

This, to be sure, was but a half-way measure; it served to convince the Americans that their non-importation agreement had been useful and expedient, but it did not conciliate them in any great degree, because the right to impose such taxes was still asserted by continuing the impost on tea. It was an abortive and very short-sighted attempt to buy off the colonies from their opposition to the principle, by making the actual amount of the tax very trivial—an attempt founded apparently on the old error, of supposing it was the money which the colonists dreaded to lose, instead of the right which they considered to be invaded.

Then came the determination, on the part of the Americans, to prevent the importation of any tea, followed by the large shipments of that article by the East India company, with the export duty taken off, attended by the well remembered reception of the tea, at Boston and Charleston, where it was thrown into the sea, and at New York, where it was placed in damp stores, for the purpose of being spoiled and rotted.

This decided conduct brought matters very shortly to a crisis. The act of parliament, closing the port of Boston, and an act providing that offenders should be sent from Massachusetts to England for trial, made apparent the necessity for deliberation and consultation among the colonists.

The congress of 1774 was called, and assembled. Of this body the members were variously constituted. Hart was elected in July, by a conference of committees from different

parts of the colony, and was a fit representative of the moderation, disinterestedness and firmness that then characterized the people who elected him.

Of that august and venerable body nothing can be said in commendation, that would be beyond the truth. To that body will future statesmen look, and learn what it is to be a patriot. There was no selfish intrigue for power, no aim at personal distinction, no factious striving for individual honours. Of the members of that congress it may emphatically be asserted, as was said of the Romans in their most virtuous age, "with them the republic was all in all; for that alone they consulted; the only faction they formed was against the common enemy; their minds, their bodies were exerted sincerely and greatly and nobly, not for personal power, but for the liberties, the rights, and the honour of their country."

The eloquent addresses prepared by this congress, to the king and the people of Great Britain, are well known, and require neither comment nor eulogium. The precise share taken by Mr. Hart in these proceedings is not known, the sittings having been secret, and no record preserved which indicates the particular conduct of each member. He is entitled to the praise, however, of having contributed with a zeal that cannot be doubted, to the magnanimous and dignified efforts made by that truly patriotic assembly, in the maintenance of the rights, liberties and peace of their country.

He returned, after the adjournment of congress, to the unvaried occupations of his farm; and waited, with anxious hope, the effect of the appeal that had been made to the generosity of the king and British people.

In January, 1775, the general assembly of New Jersey re-appointed him a representative in the congress which was to meet in the ensuing spring. He took his seat in this illus-

trious council on the tenth of May ; and attended assiduously until the adjournment in the following August.

The battle at Lexington, in the preceding April, had given a more serious aspect to the dispute, and it was the business of this congress to make the first preparations for war.

Mr. Hart was one of the oldest members, being at that time about sixty years of age, and his cool and ripened judgment aided to temper the impetuous zeal of the youthful delegates from some of the southern states.

During the recess, he devoted himself to his agricultural concerns; and finding that the farm required his almost constant care, and having seen the important measures of defence adopted, he did not resume his seat in congress when they re-assembled in September. He thought that younger men, and such as were less encumbered with families, might very properly take the labour of the public business; and having no ambition of distinction for himself, he requested the colonial assembly to excuse him from serving any longer as their delegate, setting forth at the same time the peculiar situation of his family and private affairs, as an excuse for thus seeking to withdraw from their public service. The assembly considered his apology satisfactory, and in November of the same year accepted his resignation.

He was not, however, entirely freed from public duties; as a member, and vice president of the colonial assembly, much of his time and attention was still occupied. In those days of difficulty and alarm, his wisdom and integrity, his benevolence and generosity, were too conspicuous and too useful, to remain in seclusion.

At this time, however, the royal authority ceased in New Jersey, and the general Assembly was superseded by a convention of deputies from the several counties, attended of course only by confirmed and decided whigs. This conven-

tion, on the fourteenth of February, 1776, elected Mr. Hart one of their delegates to congress, and he did not refuse the appointment.

His colleagues were William Livingston, Richard Smith, John Cooper and Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant; and they were vested with full powers to consent and agree to all measures which congress might deem necessary; and the province of New Jersey was pledged by the resolution appointing these delegates, to execute to the utmost all resolutions which congress might adopt.

The instructions implied by the terms of this appointment did not seem to contemplate so bold a measure as a declaration of independence; indeed little had yet been said on such a subject, and the hope of a happy reconciliation with the royal government was not yet extinct.

But the lapse of a few months brought a very different aspect of public affairs. The intelligence received from England of the total failure of every proposal offered in the House of Commons, tending towards a pacific policy; the treaty with the duke of Brunswick and the elector of Hesse Cassel, stipulating for the employment of foreign mercenaries in the reduction of the colonies; and the indifference shown by the British people, who it had been hoped, would have felt the wrongs attempted to be done to the Americans as outrages on their own liberties, all conspired to show a gloomy and a warlike prospect.

At home, too, the feelings of the people had become exasperated, and New Jersey, which had been second to no one of the colonies in loyalty and love of peace, became thoroughly and rapidly changed.

The machinations said to be detected early in the year 1776, which had been directed against the fidelity and spirit of the army and the safety of the commander in chief, excited the

indignant patriotism of the people of this province, perhaps more than even the proofs of determined and violent hostility on the part of the British government.

In this state of sentiment the provincial congress, in whose hands the representation of the people now resided, determined to make such changes in their delegation to the general congress as would evince the decision of their own minds, and secure the vote of New Jersey from being given in favour of temporizing or timorous measures.

Accordingly, on the twenty-first of June, a new appointment was made, in which John Hart was retained as being of accord with the people in their determination to risk all, and suffer all, that might be necessarily risked or suffered in the effort to gain independence; but some of his colleagues were not continued, because their zeal or their firmness could not so safely be trusted.

This new appointment, made after the proposition to declare independence had been brought forward in congress, and with a knowledge of Mr. Hart's opinions on the question, was accompanied with instructions "to join with the delegates of the other colonies in continental congress, in the most vigorous measures for supporting the just rights and liberties of America, and if you shall judge it necessary or expedient for this purpose, to join with them in declaring the United Colonies independent of Great Britain, entering into a confederation for union and common defence, making treaties with foreign nations for commerce and assistance, and to take such other measures as may appear to them and you necessary for those great ends, promising to support them with the whole force of this province, always observing that whatsoever plan of confederacy you enter into, the regulating the internal police of this province is to be reserved to the colonial legislature."

Although the life of John Hart was now drawing towards its close, and he was already full of years, the act most important to his future fame was yet to be performed.

A few days after this decisive step of the Jersey provincial congress, the British general Howe arrived at New York, and was soon followed by his army. The approximation of the scene of bloodshed to his own quiet home could not be regarded by him without the most anxious forebodings. That Jersey would soon witness the march and suffer the ravages of the hostile army, was a natural and reasonable anticipation. It was an additional cause of alarm, too, that the invaders were to be accompanied by outlandish auxiliaries, strangers to the tie of a common language and similar habits, which had held the British and Americans from exercising the worst atrocities of war towards each other.

Having put his hand to the plough, he would not turn back. He voted for the declaration of independence, without hesitation or reluctance; although well knowing the peril that he was bringing upon his property, his family and himself.

The declaration was at first published with only the names of Mr. Hancock, as president, and Charles Thomson, as secretary. Such was the caution still prevalent respecting this most important measure, the consequences of which would have been most disastrous to all concerned in it, if the contest had eventuated in the success of the British armies.

It is remarkable in the history of the revolutionary war, and is highly honourable to the patriots of that period, that their courage and spirit always appeared to be most lofty when the pressure of external circumstances seemed most disheartening. When the declaration of independence was first promulgated, the British army had just landed on Staten Island; and no one could tell which of the members of the con-

gress had voted for a manifesto so offensive to the royal government. The president and secretary alone could be identified as individually responsible. Soon afterwards the battle on Long Island was fought; the American army was defeated with considerable loss; and it was known that the royal army was numerous, well disciplined and brave: under these circumstances a new publication of the declaration was made, with the names of all the members, both those who were actually present, and those who subsequently came into congress.

Far from shrinking at this alarming crisis from the share of responsibility and contingent punishment attaching to each individual, by a concealment of the part that each had taken, every one seemed desirous to affix his name to an instrument which would have brought down on all the signers the direst vengeance of the British government, if the contest, apparently so unequal, had ended in the overthrow of the colonists.

It is impossible to contemplate without admiration the moral courage, the generous disinterestedness, and the conscientious resolution that could impel such a man as John Hart to sign his name to a paper which he could not but know would be a signal for the devastation of his farm, the dispersion of his family, and the total impoverishment of himself and his children. Not impelled by personal ambition, nor sustained by the ardour of youth; already trembling with the feebleness of age, and having neither hope of a protracted life to enjoy in his own person the restoration of peace and the establishment of political rights; nor suited by temperament, habit or education, for the attainment of political distinction; what could have supplied him with the motive for such heroic self-devotion? His motive is to be sought only in a sober conviction of rights invaded, in the dictates of a pure and en-

lightened patriotism, and a pious reliance on the protection of Heaven upon those who conscientiously performed their duty.

Accustomed during all his life to guide his conduct by the rules of right, and not by considerations of expediency, the same principle of rectitude which had made him the chosen arbiter of all disputes among his neighbours, and acquired for him the title of "honest"—a distinction which immortalized Aristides; this honesty impelled him to execute all his duties faithfully in whatever situation he might be placed, and guided him in the most elevated public act which was to be known and judged by the whole world, as well as in the most trivial concerns of his domestic circle.

New Jersey soon became the theatre of war. The British army proceeded as far as the banks of the Delaware, and their progress and vicinity was marked by the most unrestrained and wanton destruction of property. The details of their ravages, as they were communicated to congress, were most shocking and odious. The children of Mr. Hart escaped from insult by retiring from the neighbourhood of the troops; leaving the farm and stock to be pillaged and destroyed by the Hessians.

The waste committed there by the marauding parties of the enemy was unsparing, and they sought with great eagerness to make Mr. Hart himself a prisoner.

Being unwilling to leave his family at this particular juncture, he exposed himself frequently to the necessity of a precipitate flight, and a most inconvenient concealment. It had been impossible, so late in the season, to remove Mrs. Hart, who was afflicted with a disorder which terminated in her death, at this gloomy and disastrous period. Mr. Hart was driven from the bedside of his dying partner, and hunted through the woods and among the hills, with a perseverance,

on the part of his pursuers, that was worthy of a better cause.

It was not until the latter part of December, that the enterprise of Washington, in striking suddenly at the Hessians posted at Trenton, cleared Jersey of these unwelcome visitors. Until that time Mr. Hart was a fugitive among the scenes of his youthful sports and his manly usefulness. While the most tempting offers of pardon were held forth to all rebels that would give in their adhesion to the royal cause, and while Washington's army was dwindling down to a mere handful, this old man was carrying his gray hairs and his infirmities about from cottage to cottage, and from cave to cave, while his farm was pillaged, his property plundered, his family afflicted and dispersed ; he was, through sorrow, humiliation and suffering, wearing out his bodily strength and hastening the approach of decrepitude and death. Yet he never despaired, never repented the course he had taken ; but was always hoping for the best, and upheld by an approving conscience, and by a firm trust that the favour of Heaven would not be withheld from a righteous cause.

The particulars of his wanderings, as he afterwards unostentatiously related them, would require too minute a detail for the scope of the present work. The extremities to which he was reduced, may be judged from two facts : one is, that for a long period he never ventured to sleep twice at the same house ; and the other, which he very good humouredly told of himself, was, that being sorely pressed for a safe night's lodging, and being unknown where he applied for one, he was obliged to share the accommodations of a large dog ; a bed-fellow, as he declared, not in those evil times the most exceptionable.

The successes of the American army at Trenton and Princeton, and the consequent evacuation of the greater part of Jer-

sey by the British, relieved him from his most uncomfortable concealment, and enabled him to collect his family again, and set about repairing the damages done to his plantation. They were more easily repaired, indeed, serious as they were, than the injuries which hardship and anxiety had committed on his health and constitution. In restoring his devastated farm to order, and in giving advice to his friends and neighbours, who now in great numbers sought his counsel, he found ample occupation, and did not resume his seat in congress.

He lived to see much brighter prospects open ; the surrender of Burgoyne, and the French alliance, left little doubt that with more or less of disaster and difficulty, but surely even if slowly, independence and peace would be obtained.

Happy in the strengthening of this hope into a confident anticipation, and in the consciousness of having well performed his duty during the whole of his life, he sunk into the arms of death, in the year 1780 ; leaving a character as free from any stain of sordid, or selfish motive, as it has ever fallen to the lot of man to sustain.

His only public employment, except those which have been mentioned, was that of justice of the peace ; in the exercise of which he was an example of patient investigation and equitable judgment ; qualities which brought to the jurisdiction of his humble judgment-seat many of his neighbours, among whom the belief of his untarnished probity and cool sagacity was unbounded.

He was in personal appearance highly prepossessing ; and in his younger days had been called handsome. His height was about five feet ten inches, his form straight and well proportioned, his hair very black, his eyes light, and his complexion dark. He was a man of great kindness and justice in his domestic relations ; of which traits many characteristic

anecdotes are recollected by his surviving friends. It is told, for example, that he had a negro servant named Jack, between whom and his master the best understanding always subsisted. During one of Mr. Hart's absences from home, Jack committed some offence, which incurred the heavy censure of the family, and subjected him to the charge of such a mal-appropriation of valuables as might fall within the definition of larceny. On his master's return this was told to him, with urgent requests that he should cause the offender to be punished. But he resisted, and good humouredly declared that it was impossible for Jack to steal from him, since he confided all to Jack's care, and nothing more than a breach of trust could be made of it, which it was not worth while to prosecute.

Mr. Hart was a munificent benefactor of the Baptist church, of Hopewell township, to which he presented the ground for the meeting house, and a burial ground adjoining. He attended with his family, regularly, on the public worship at this church until his last illness, and was always known as a sincere, but unostentatious christian.



ABRAHAM CLARK.

ABRAHAM CLARK was born in the borough of Elizabethtown, county of Essex, and province of New Jersey, on the fifteenth of February, 1726. He was the only child of alderman Thomas Clark, whose ancestors first settled upon the farm which descended to his son. He enjoyed a good English education, under competent teachers, and was particularly addicted to the study of the mathematics, and of civil law. In the year 1743, at the age of twenty-two years, he married Sarah Hetfield of Elizabethtown, who survived him ten years.

A constitution naturally weak, and a slender form, prevented him from engaging in laborious pursuits, to which, although by education a farmer, he was wholly unaccustomed. His principal occupations in early life were surveying, conveyancing, and giving legal advice. He was not, by profession, a lawyer, but gave advice gratuitously ; a task for which he had rendered himself competent, by the ardent pursuit of his favourite study. This generosity, which, in those more primitive times, was held in high estimation, procured him the honourable title of the "poor man's counsellor." His frequent services as an arbitrator of litigated titles to land, in different counties of the state, portray the high estimation in which his integrity and the correctness of his judgment were held, beyond the immediate circle within which he lived ; and

this opinion is confirmed by the appointment of the general assembly, which empowered him to settle undivided commons.

Previous to the commencement of his congressional duties, the confidence reposed by his fellow citizens in the zeal and ability of Mr. Clark, had been variously manifested. As high sheriff of the county of Essex, and clerk of the colonial assembly at Amboy, under the royal dominion, he had been distinguished for official assiduity and capacity. But neither the enjoyment of office, nor the prospect, however flattering, of increasing distinction, would seduce him from the natural allegiance which he owed to his native country. When the coming tempest of war began to agitate the land, he had already passed the meridian of life. He had arrived at an age when the actions of men are more frequently guided by principle than passion, and the calm circumspection of experience has succeeded the hot and hasty ebullitions of youth. It was, therefore, under a well settled and solemn conviction of the justice of the cause, that he appeared in the first ranks of the revolutionary phalanx, and devoted his remaining years to the service of his country. The oppressive claims of the British parliament, the inveterateness with which they were pursued, and the hostile spirit which characterized all measures touching the government of the colonies, were incitements which aroused all the energies of his mind, and led him to become a principal actor in the eventful scenes which marked the course of the liberating contest.

In the dawn of the revolution, he distinguished himself as an active member of the committee of public safety, as a constant attendant and assistant at popular meetings, and as a persevering promoter of patriotic feelings, by private communication. After an unremitting series of services in his native province, he was summoned to exercise his talents upon

a more extensive theatre. On the twenty-first of June, 1776, he was appointed by the provincial congress, in conjunction with Richard Stockton, John Hart, Francis Hopkinson, and Dr. John Witherspoon, a delegate to the continental congress. They were instructed to unite with the delegates of the other colonies in the most vigorous measures for supporting the just rights and liberties of America, and if it should be deemed necessary or expedient for this purpose, to join with them in declaring the United colonies independent of Great Britain.

Mr. Clark applied himself zealously to the discharge of his new duties, and was, for a long time, one of the leading members of the Jersey delegation. His industry, abilities, and perseverance, in the business of committees, and his plain, clear view of general measures, rendered him a valuable member of the house; while his patriotism and integrity attracted the respect and admiration of his colleagues. His faith and firmness were amply tested, a few days after he took his seat, by his cordial co-operation with those who advocated the immediate proclamation of Independence; and it is believed that his strong conviction of the propriety of that measure united with his many political virtues in promoting his appointment. One of the first duties which devolved on him as a member of the great national council, involving personal safety and fortune, and, what ranked above all other considerations in the estimation of Mr. Clark, the liberties of his country, was discharged with alacrity; and he affixed his name to the Declaration of Independence, with those feelings of pride and resolution which are excited by a noble but dangerous action. On the thirtieth of November, 1776, he was again elected by the provincial congress of New Jersey, and continued, with the exception of the session of 1779, to be annually re-elected a delegate from that state until the month of November, 1783. During this long period of service, his necessary intimacy with the proceedings of congress, and the

course and nature of the arduous and protracted affairs which frequently demanded a great extent of memory and attention, rendered him an active and useful member. In 1788, he again took his seat in the national legislature.

The intervals of his non-election to congress were not devoted to leisure, nor applied to that relief from public cares which the feebleness of his constitution required. His exertions and services in the state legislature, of which he was a member during those periods, were properly appreciated, and his influence became so extensive, that he personally incurred popular praise or reproach, in proportion to the applause or odium excited by the general acts of the legislature. An act to regulate the practice in the courts of law in New Jersey, in some degree curtailing the emoluments of practitioners, was denominated *Clark's Law*, by the members of the bar; and they, in general, manifested a strong spirit of enmity to the supposed framer of the act. He was styled the "father of the paper currency," although he opposed the emission with the whole weight of his influence, until popular meetings were convened to devise a plan for arresting the course of justice, and closing the courts. Contrary to the advice of his friends, who urged the personal danger he incurred, he attended one of these meetings, where he explained and enforced the reasons which induced him to desire the postponement of the emission, until the fate of similar experiments then making in the neighbouring states, might afford them a practical view of their results. He was instrumental, for a time, in calming the popular ferment, but was ultimately compelled to coalesce in a measure which appeared unavoidable.

Mr. Clark possessed the reputation of being a rigid economist in all things relating to the public treasure. Having, during the impoverished state of the country, strongly opposed a proposition of commutation for pay made in behalf of the officers of the revolutionary army, they became his de

cided enemies, and united their influence with the legal interest, in opposing his popularity. In justification of the course which he had pursued, he maintained that he, as well as many other civil officers, had cheerfully sacrificed a large share of property and domestic enjoyment for the public benefit, and that he considered the officers of the army, in common with himself, his family, and all others, as fully compensated for years of suffering and privation, by the result of the contest.

Mr. Clark was one among the earliest promoters of those measures which led to a convention for the purpose of framing a more stable and efficacious constitution for the government of the states. He had frequently discussed this subject with governor Clinton, of New York, particularly as it related to the oppressive conduct of the government of that state, in levying duties on vessels from other states; and he had clearly demonstrated the dangerous tendency of the measure. It is not, however, probable that he contemplated, at that period, the magnificent fabric which was subsequently erected on the ruins of the old confederation; his views and wishes were then circumscribed to an enlargement of the powers of the latter instrument.

In 1787 he was appointed a member of the general convention which framed the federal constitution, but was prevented by ill health from joining in the deliberations of that illustrious assembly. He was opposed to the constitution, in its primitive form; but his objections being removed by subsequent amendments, it met with his cordial approbation and support. Advantage was taken of these free sentiments by those who were inimical to Mr. Clark. His objections were magnified into a charge of anti-federalism, which, joined with the opposition of the legal interest, and of the discontented officers, together with a corrupt election, (which was referred to the first congress,) placed him, for the only time during his long political life, in the minority in the elections of New

Jersey. He was, however, appointed, in the winter of 1789-1790, a commissioner to settle the accounts of the state with the United States, which office he held until the ensuing election, when he was elected a representative in the second congress, and continued to hold this honourable appointment until a short time previous to his death.

Towards the close of his public career, Mr. Clark continued, with unimpaired activity, to engage in the promotion of such political measures as, according to his mature judgment, appeared compatible with the welfare of his country, or necessary for the support of its dignity. In the congress of 1794 he exerted his influence and talents in support of the memorable resolutions submitted by Mr. Madison, relative to the commerce of the United States. From the peculiar state of parties at that period, the proposed commercial discriminations were, in some degree, invested with principles entirely distinct from the mere regulation of trade. The enthusiasm in favour of the French nation, so recently manifested in the treatment and endurance of Genet, rendered all measures calculated to injure Great Britain particularly consonant with the popular feeling. At the same time, the propriety of retaliating the restrictions on American trade, of vindicating our commercial rights, and of establishing permanent regulations for their support, formed the bases of strong arguments in support of the resolutions. During this long and animated debate, conducted with a degree of eloquence and spirit commensurate with the interest which the propositions had excited, Mr. Clark was distinguished as one of their most powerful advocates.

The proceedings of the national legislature continued gradually to assume a more threatening character, and a war with Great Britain appeared to be almost inevitable. The irritable state of the public temper was felt upon the floor of congress, and the debates were conducted with peculiar

vehemence. Numerous propositions had been made, during the general ferment, of the most decisive nature. On the twenty-seventh of March, 1794, Mr. Dayton moved a resolution for sequestering all debts due to British subjects, for the purpose of indemnifying our citizens for spoliations committed on their commerce by British cruisers; but before any question was taken on this proposition, Mr. Clark moved a resolution which suspended, for a time, the consideration of the commercial regulations. This was to prohibit all intercourse with Great Britain, until full compensation was made to our citizens for the injuries sustained by them from British armed vessels, and until the western posts should be delivered up. Warm and animated discussions of the several propositions continued to take place daily, but they were suffered, by the majority, to remain undecided. On the sixteenth of April, president Washington announced to the senate, the nomination of the honourable John Jay as envoy extraordinary to his Britannic majesty, for the purpose of adjusting the difficulties which existed between the two countries.

On the eighteenth of April, a motion to consider the report of the committee on the resolution proposed by Mr. Clark, was opposed principally on the ground, that as Mr. Jay had been nominated to the court of Great Britain, no obstacle ought to be thrown in his way. It was also said, that the adoption of the resolution would be a bar to negotiation, as it used the language of menace, and would certainly be received with indignation; that it also prescribed the terms on which alone a treaty should be made, and was consequently an infringement of the right of the executive to negotiate, and an indelicacy to the department; and that, as it withheld the benefits of American commerce from one belligerent, while it remained free to the other, it manifested

a partiality which was incompatible with neutrality, and led to war. On the contrary, it was urged that the measure was strictly within the duty of the legislature, they having solely the right to regulate commerce; that, if there was any indelicacy in the clashing of the proceedings of the legislature and executive, it was to the latter, and not to the former, that this indelicacy was to be imputed; that the resolution had been several days depending in the house, before the nomination of an envoy had been made; and that America, having a right as an independent nation to regulate her own commerce, the resolution could not lead to war. A bill was finally brought in conforming to Mr. Clark's resolution, and carried by a considerable majority. It was, however, lost in the senate, on the twenty-eighth of April, by the casting vote of Mr. Adams, the vice-president.

The feelings which actuated Mr. Clark in his course of public usefulness, were wholly disinterested. Separating the patriot from the father, he scrupulously refrained from exerting his influence with congress in favour of his sons, who were officers in the army, and had been captured by the enemy: yet a part of their confinement was in the prison-ship Jersey, and they suffered more than the ordinary hardships of prisoners. In one instance, however, paternal feeling was exercised with propriety. The treatment of American prisoners by the British had, in many cases, been peculiarly barbarous, and disgraceful to a civilized nation, and retaliation was the indirect mode by which protection was afforded to our suffering countrymen. Thomas Clark, a son of Mr. Clark, and a captain of artillery, experienced the most cruel persecution: he was immured in a dungeon, with no other food than that which was introduced by his fellow prisoners through a key-hole. A representation of this fact being made to congress, retaliation was resorted to in the person

of a British captain ; the desired result was produced, and captain Clark's sufferings were mitigated.

Exhausted by his political toils, and the infirmities incident to a feeble constitution, Mr. Clark finally retired from public life on the adjournment of congress, ninth June, 1794.—Patriotism was the most distinguishing trait in the character of this plain and pious man. In private life, he was reserved and contemplative : preferring retirement to company, and reflection to amusement, he appeared to be continually absorbed in the affairs of the public. Limited in his circumstances, moderate in his desires, and unambitious of wealth, he was far from being parsimonious in his private concerns, although a rigid economist in public affairs.—His person was of the common height, his form slender, and his eyebrows heavy, which gave an appearance of austerity to his countenance. His habits were extremely temperate, and his manner thoughtful and sedate.

In the autumn of 1794, this excellent man experienced a *coup de soleil*, or stroke of the sun, which terminated his existence in two hours. He died in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and was buried in the church-yard at Rahway, upon which church he had bestowed numerous benefactions. The inscription which designates the grave of the patriot, comprehends a concise view of the character of him who rests within it :

Firm and decided as a patriot,
Zealous and faithful as a friend to the public,
He loved his country,
And adhered to her cause
In the darkest hours of her struggles
Against oppression.



ed, had they first received the news. In after life, Mr. Morris felt some pride in calling Mr. Charles Willing "his master;" he had been intimate in his family, and found him a kind, indulgent, and valuable friend. During his last illness Mr. Willing requested to see him, and gave, upon that occasion, an unequivocal proof of the high opinion he entertained of the youthful character of Mr. Morris; "Robert," said he, emphatically, "always continue to act as you have done."

His extensive mercantile knowledge, and close application to the discharge of his duties, attracted the friendship and confidence of Mr. Thomas Willing, who proposed to him, some time after the expiration of the term for which he had engaged himself, to form together a commercial connexion. This partnership was entered into in the year 1754, and continued until 1793, embracing the long period of thirty-nine years. Mr. Morris was the acting partner, and previous to the commencement of the revolution, the house was engaged more extensively in commerce than any other in Philadelphia.

Private interest possessed little influence over the mind of Robert Morris, when it clashed with his high notions of public duty. The tyrannical measures adopted by the British ministry in relation to the government of the colonies, gradually assuming a more oppressive form, and urged in a more haughty manner, were viewed by him with a calm and discerning eye, which seemed to penetrate into the darkness of futurity, and unfold the glories and sufferings of the approaching revolution. Among the first to feel and to resent the encroachments of power, he never wavered for a moment in his political faith; although many of those eminent men who afterwards distinguished themselves in the foremost ranks of patriotism, and breasted the tempest of war with daring and dauntless devotion, were, at that critical period, nerveless

and undecided. Minds shackled by precedent do not at once regain their freedom ; and notwithstanding the assertions of British journalists, the colonists had been among the most loyal subjects of the crown. A striking instance of this force of habit, and the general reluctance to oppose the laws of the mother country, however harsh and arbitrary, occurred a short time previous to the period fixed for the first operation of the stamp act. A very numerous meeting of the members of the bar, residing in the city of Philadelphia and its vicinity, was held at (Mullin's Beef-Steak House in Water street, at that time) a much frequented hotel. Questions of a nature formidable to the meeting, were widely discussed. It was debated, " Whether they should intermit all business or carry it on *with* stamps or *without* them, and set the stamp act at defiance ?" When the question for proceeding without stamps was proposed, a great majority were in favour of postponing the decision ; it was, however, finally put, and Mr. John Dickenson strenuously argued against adopting the measure, upon the ground that the colonies were bound by all acts of parliament. Only three individuals, Richard Peters, Edward Biddle, and James Allen, voted for going on without stamps, and risking the consequences. Not long after this exhibition of lukewarmness or timidity, the members of the bar, with very few exceptions, ranked among the most eminent and determined patriots ; and they preserved that character through the whole course of the revolutionary conflict : this change was effected, when it appeared that no relaxation could be expected in the determined plan, to impose taxes on the colonies without their consent. Mr. Dickenson particularly distinguished himself as the advocate of doctrines directly the reverse of his opinions delivered at the tavern.

Mr. Morris zealously united in all voluntary associations for public purposes, and was generally distinguished as a lead-

er in measures of importance. As no man felt more deeply the national degradation which would ensue from the triumph of the British parliament, in relation to colonial taxation, he exerted himself with peculiar activity to avert it. His influence and his talents proved essentially beneficial during the popular excitement which preceded the revolution. At that ominous period, his firmness and equanimity were displayed on all proper occasions, and contributed to settle the public mind into that state of calm and steady determination, which strikes more fear into the soul of the tyrant than all the wild and irregular paroxysms of passion.—Ever consistent in his principles and conduct, he signed, without hesitation, the non-importation agreement, adopted by the merchants of Philadelphia in the year 1765; preferring the sacrifice of private interest to the continuance of an intercourse, which increased the revenue of the British government, and enlarged the resources of a hostile nation. The house of Willing and Morris was engaged in extensive mercantile transactions with England, and imported large quantities of her manufactures and colonial produce: hence the cessation of those branches of commerce, was, to them, an important sacrifice.

The unalterable resolution of Mr. Morris, with respect to his political course of conduct, appears to have been formed in the early part of the year 1775: the shedding of American blood in Massachusetts, for ever fixed the principles upon which his resplendent services in the darkest days of the revolution were founded, and extinguished the last glimmering of hope that the evils and miseries of war might yet be averted. On St. George's day, (twenty-third April, 1775,) about one hundred guests and members of the St. George's society were assembled at the City Tavern in Philadelphia, to celebrate the anniversary of their tutelary saint. Mr. Morris was the presiding officer. Reconciliation and a change of ministers

were the phantoms which had lulled and deluded the American community. About five o'clock in the afternoon, in the height of their festivity, when moderate hilarity alone had attended their libations, the news of the massacre at Lexington, which occurred four days previous, was communicated to the company. The change of scene was instantaneous and appalling: an electrical shock could not have been more suddenly prostrating. The tables were immediately deserted, and the seats overturned. Mr. Morris, and a few members, among whom was Richard Peters, (the sole survivor among all those assembled on that day,) retained their seats, and viewed this extraordinary display in silent astonishment. When the fugitives had retreated, a solemn scene succeeded the merriment and gayety which, a few moments before, had resounded through the hall. After feelingly deploring the awful event which separated them for ever from the British government; the small party that remained took leave of their patron saint, and pronounced a solemn requiem over the painted vapour,—*reconciliation*. Mr. Morris, in unison with his associates, at that time avowed his irrevocable decision as to revolutionary measures, from which he never deviated.

The appointment of Mr. Morris, by the legislature of Pennsylvania, on the third of November, 1775, as one of the delegates to the second congress, was his first formal entrance into public life. The uniformity and solidity of his opinions relative to the connexions between Great Britain and her continental colonies, united with his powerful and dispassionate mind, his high rank in society, and the extensive influence which he enjoyed, to render him an able and favourite representative of the state, and a valuable coadjutor in the deliberations of the national council. Soon after he had assumed his seat in congress, he was added to the secret committee, (of which he was the chairman,) that had been formed, on the

eighteenth of September, to contract for the importation of arms, ammunition, and gunpowder. On the eleventh of December, he was appointed a member of the committee to devise ways and means of furnishing the colonies with a naval armament; and their report, embracing the expedience of augmenting the navy by the addition of five ships of 32, five of 28, and three of 24 guns, being adopted, a naval committee was formed, of which Mr. Morris was a member, with full powers to carry the plan into execution, with all possible expedition. In the beginning of 1776, he was conspicuous in the discussions which attended the regulation of trade, and the restrictions under which it ought to be placed. On the fifteenth of April, 1776, he was specially commissioned to negotiate bills of exchange, with a pledge of indemnity from congress should any loss arise from his responsibility as the endorser. On the twentieth of July, he was re-elected a representative of the state of Pennsylvania.

When the approach of the enemy through New Jersey caused the removal of congress from Philadelphia to Baltimore, the national affairs wore a gloomy and disheartening aspect. Many firm friends of the cause believed that no exertions of the feeble and suffering army of Washington, could impede the progress of Cornwallis towards Philadelphia, and that the unequal conflict was rapidly approaching an unfavourable termination. But the faith of Mr. Morris continued unshaken, and on the very day that congress was compelled to retire to Baltimore, he assumed the responsibility of borrowing ten thousand dollars for the use of the committee, relying on the indemnification promised by the national legislature, at a period when it was uncertain whether, in a few days, their functions would not be arrested and the body dissolved. To the prevention of this fearful event, to the fresh excitement of hope and confidence in the

people, to the animation of the spirit of the army so much required, to the protection, at that time, of the city of Philadelphia, and to the arrest of the enemy's advance in the fall career of conquest, Robert Morris was the principal contributor ; because, without the pecuniary aid furnished by him, the exertions and plans of the commander in chief could not have been carried into effect, nor the valour of his troops been brought into action. In December, 1776, when congress retired from Philadelphia, a committee, consisting of Mr. Morris, Mr. Clymer, and Mr. Walton, was appointed, with extensive powers, to remain in that city, and execute all necessary and proper continental business. Being in daily expectation of the arrival of the enemy, Mr. Morris removed his family to the country, and resided with an intimate friend who had resolved, at every hazard, to remain in the city. At this time, he received a letter from general Washington, who was then encamped with his army at the place now called New Hope, on the Delaware, in which it was stated, that while the enemy was accurately informed of all his movements, he was compelled, from the want of specie, to remain in complete ignorance of their designs, and that a certain sum specified, was absolutely necessary to the safety of the army, and to enable him to obtain such intelligence of the movements and precise position of the enemy on the opposite shore, as would authorise him to act offensively. This pressing application, and appeal to the feelings of Mr. Morris, which, from the urgency of the occasion, was despatched by a confidential messenger, was received at a time when compliance was almost hopeless, owing to the general flight of the citizens. He frequently adverted to the mental depression which he experienced on that trying occasion, and to the means he employed to relieve the necessities of the commander in chief. From the time he received the despatch

until evening, he revolved deeply and gloomily in his mind, the means through which he might realise the expectations which had been formed from his patriotism and influence : his usual hour of retiring from the counting room arrived, and as he was proceeding slowly and sorrowfully home, he accidentally met a gentleman of the society of Friends, with whom he was intimate, and who placed implicit confidence in his integrity. He inquired the news from Mr. Morris, who replied ; "The most important news is, that I require a certain sum in specie, and that you must let me have it." His friend hesitated and mused for a moment ; "your security is to be my note and my honour," continued Mr. Morris—"Robert, thou shalt have it," replied the friend ; and this personal loan, causing a prompt and timely compliance with the demand, enabled general Washington to gain the signal victory over the hireling Hessians at Trenton, which not only diminished the numerical force of the enemy, but had the necessary and important results of animating the spirit of patriotism and checking the hopes and predictions of our enemies. It also destroyed the impression which the reputed prowess of the conquered foe, and the experience of their ferocity over the unprotected and defenceless, had made among the people. Such was the instrumentality of Robert Morris, in the victory of Trenton ; and it may be truly remarked, that although his own brows were unadorned with the laurels of the warrior, it was his hand which crowned the heroes who triumphed on that day.

On the tenth of March, 1777, he was, a third time, appointed by the assembly of Pennsylvania to represent that state in congress, in conjunction with Benjamin Franklin, George Clymer, James Wilson, Daniel Roberdeau, and Jonathan B. Smith. During this year, the "secret committee" was dissolved, and succeeded in all its powers by the "committee of

commerce," of which Mr. Morris was a prominent member. On the twenty-eighth of November, he was selected, together with Mr. Gerry and Mr. Jones to repair to the army, and in a private confidential consultation with the commander in chief, to consider the best and most practicable means for conducting a winter campaign with vigour and success, and, with the concurrence of general Washington, to direct every measure which circumstances might require for the promotion of the public service. He was frequently and actively engaged in managing the fiscal concerns of congress, a duty for which his capacity for business, and intimate knowledge of pecuniary transactions, rendered him peculiarly competent. On the twenty-seventh of August, 1778, he was appointed a member of the standing committee of finance. Besides the enthusiastic zeal which he manifested in the cause of his country, and the financial talents which he possessed, his commercial credit probably ranked higher than that of any other man in the community ; and this credit he unhesitatingly devoted to the public service, whenever necessity required such an evidence of his patriotism and disinterestedness. These occasions were neither few in their number nor trifling in their nature. Richard Peters, one of the few surviving prominent men of the revolution, who filled the important and most confidential station of secretary to the board of war, bears testimony that Mr. Morris frequently obtained pecuniary, as well as other supplies, which were most pressingly required for the service, on his own responsibility, and apparently on his own account, when, from the known state of the public treasury, they could not have been procured by the government. Judge Peters, from his official station, possessed the most perfect knowledge of every military transaction, and of the influence of Mr. Morris in giving efficacy to enterprise. The personal friendship which subsisted be-

tween those active and enlightened patriots, and their constant co-operation in the great work of freedom, closely united them together, and it is by the pen of the surviving statesman, that the particulars of the providential supply of lead for the army is afforded. "In 1779 or 1780, two of the most distressing years of the war, general Washington wrote to me a most alarming account of the prostrate condition of the military stores, and enjoined my immediate exertions to supply the deficiencies. There were no musket cartridges but those in the men's boxes, and they were wet; of course, if attacked, a retreat, or a rout, was inevitable. We (the board of war) had exhausted all the lead accessible to us, having caused even the spouts of houses to be melted, and had offered, abortively, the equivalent in paper of two shillings specie per pound for lead. I went, in the evening of the day on which I received this letter, to a splendid entertainment, given by Don Juan Mirailles, the Spanish minister. My heart was sad, but I had the faculty of brightening my countenance, even under gloomy disasters; yet it seems *then* not sufficiently adroitly. Mr. Morris, who was one of the guests, and knew me well, discovered some casual traits of depression. He accosted me in his usual blunt and disengaged manner: 'I see some clouds passing across the sunny countenance you assume; what is the matter?' After some hesitation, I showed him the general's letter, which I had brought from the office, with the intention of placing it at home in a private cabinet. He played with my anxiety, which he did not relieve for some time. At length, however, with great and sincere delight, he called me aside, and told me that the Holkar privateer had just arrived at his wharf, with *ninety tons of lead*; which she had brought as ballast. It had been landed at Martinique, and stone ballast had supplied its place; but this had been put on shore, and the lead

again taken in. 'You shall have my half of this fortunate supply; *there* are the owners of the other half' (indicating gentlemen in the apartment). 'Yes, but I am already under heavy personal engagements, as guarantee for the department, to those, and other gentlemen.' 'Well,' rejoined Mr. Morris, 'they will take your assumption with my guarantee.' I, instantly, on these terms, secured the lead, left the entertainment, sent for the proper officers, and set more than one hundred people to work, during the night. Before morning a supply of cartridges was ready, and sent off to the army. I could relate many more such occurrences. Thus did our affairs succeed, "*per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum*;" and these *discrimina rerum* occurred so often, that we had frequently occasion feelingly to exclaim,

'Quod optanti divum promittere nemo
Auserat—Fors en! attulit ultro.'

Events, happy or adverse, succeeded each other so rapidly, that the present almost obliterated the past; at least the actual employment growing out of the present, often critical, arduous, and hazardous, blunted our recollection. We lived, in many periods of our struggle, by the day; and deemed ourselves happy, if the sun set upon us without misfortune."

Few public men have escaped the breath of slander. During the time that congress assembled at Yorktown, reflections were indulged by a member of that body, which tended to raise a suspicion of fraudulent proceedings to the detriment of the public, by the house of Willing, Morris, & Co. The established character of Mr. Laurens impresses the belief that his sole object in making these remarks was to do justice; and this opinion is strengthened by his co-operation, however late, in the vindication of Mr. Morris. On the nineteenth

of January, 1779, a committee of five was appointed to inquire into the facts set forth, in the accusatory papers which had been submitted to congress. Three days after, Mr. Morris, having been informed of their appointment, delivered his defence in writing to the committee. Never was vindication more triumphant and conclusive. On the twenty-eighth of the same month, he addressed a letter to congress, requesting, as insinuations had been publicly thrown out against him on the floor of congress, relative to the books of the secret committee, that a special committee should be appointed to examine the entries and settlements made by him in those books, as well as the expenditure of public money intrusted to him, and to the house of Willing, Morris, & Co. ; he further requested that the committee should examine the state of their present unsettled dependencies with the United States, and be directed to report to the house specially on the subject, in order that his conduct might be duly understood in congress, and from thence made known to the public by the best authority.—On the ninth of February, the committee brought in their report. Previous to its being taken into consideration, on the eleventh, the memory of Mr. Laurens was invigorated by the words “new ship” contained in the written vindication of Mr. Morris : he accordingly produced a paper, containing an extract of a letter from the secret committee to Thomas Morris, commercial agent at Nantz, stating that a *new ship* had been chartered in Baltimore ; and concluded by stating, that it afforded him the greatest satisfaction to have it in his power to produce an evidence, which, in his opinion, put it beyond all doubt that the cargo of the ship *Farmer*, which formed the basis of the accusation, was shipped on public account.—It appears that Willing, Morris, & Co. had been hastily suspected of mingling their private transactions with the public business committed to their charge.

From the minutes of the secret committee of the fifteenth of August, and twentieth and twenty-sixth of September, it is proved, that that committee, from a full confidence in the integrity of Robert Morris, from a knowledge of his commercial abilities, and from a conviction that his extensive mercantile connexions, both at home and abroad, would enable him to execute with facility the continental commercial affairs, requested and authorised him to purchase produce in the different states on public account, and to export the same, intrusting him solely and exclusively with the transaction of the business. At the same time it was understood by the secret committee that his purchases and exports were to be made under cover of the firm of Willing, Morris, & Co.; and this mode was adopted to prevent the increase in the price of produce and hire of vessels, which generally took place when it was known that purchases and contracts were making on public account. These premises having been fully substantiated, it was then proved that although the ship *Farmor* was chartered by Willing, Morris, & Co., it was effected on continental account, and that her cargo of iron and tobacco was purchased and shipped on the same account; thus giving the whole transaction the colour of a private commercial concern, correspondent to the plan adopted by the secret committee. Moreover, satisfactory evidence was produced that Willing, Morris, & Co. did not load any chartered ship on their account and risk, during the time that Mr. Morris acted as the agent of the committee. Congress, therefore, unanimously agreed with the report, that the defence of Mr. Morris was full and explicit on every fact, circumstance, and question, stated in the charges against him, and supported by clear and satisfactory vouchers; that he had clearly and fully vindicated himself; and that in the execution of the powers committed to him by the secret com-

mittee, he had acted with fidelity and integrity, and an honourable zeal for the welfare of his country.—Similar aspersions were heaped upon him during the course of his financial career, which, when he deigned to notice them at all, were dissipated with equal facility and success.

Robert Morris, however, is now free from the persecutions of man ; and it becomes the duty of his biographer, warmed by the recollection of his services and virtues, to repel the indignities offered to his ashes, and crush, with stubborn facts, that ignoble spirit which would exalt a favourite individual on the wreck of another's character, and indulge sectional prejudices and party animosity, by labouring to libel a name, which shall live when its calumniators are forgotten, or only remembered as models of ingratitude and malignity.

In the year 1780, when the reverses in the south had produced general depression, and the increasing and clamorous wants of the army threatened its total dissolution, Mr. Morris, with a zeal guided by that sound discretion which turns expenditure to the best account, established a bank, in conjunction with many patriotic citizens of Philadelphia, the principal object of which was to supply the army with provisions and rum. His partner, Mr. Thomas Willing, was appointed president through his agency, and Tench Francis, cashier. The plan was digested by Mr. Morris, who to establish confidence in the institution, proposed a subscription among the citizens in the form of bonds, obliging them to pay, if it should become necessary, the amounts affixed to their names, in gold and silver, for the purpose of fulfilling the engagements of the bank. He headed the list with a subscription of 10,000*l.*; and was followed by others, to the amount of 315,000*l.* Pennsylvania money : in the lapse of less than half a century, ninety-one of the ninety-six subscribers who gave their bonds on this patriotic occasion, had been number-

ed with the dead. Of these survivors also, who were Richard Peters, William Hall, John Donaldson, Thomas Leiper, and John Mease, the two last, since this memoir was first written, have paid the debt of nature.

The directors were authorized to borrow money on the credit of the bank, and to grant special notes bearing interest at six per cent. The credit of the members was to be employed, and their money advanced, if necessary, but no emolument whatever were to be derived from the institution. Congress, while they expressed a high sense of this patriotic transaction, pledged the faith of the United States effectually to reimburse and indemnify the associators. Thus, at a time when the public credit was at its lowest ebb, and the public exigencies most pressing, an institution was erected on the credit and exertions of a few patriotic individuals, for the purpose of supplying, and transporting, to the army, three millions of rations, and three hundred hogheads of rum; it continued until the ensuing year, when the Bank of North America was established.

The last re-election of Mr. Morris to congress, previous to the adoption of the Federal Constitution, occurred on the thirteenth of December, 1777. The exertion of his talents in the public councils, the use of his credit in procuring supplies at home and abroad, and his personal labour as special agent, or congressional committee-man, were not the only means adopted by him to support the cause in which he had embarked. The free and public expression of his sentiments, both in the daily and nightly meetings of the zealous, and in the interchange of friendly intercourse with his fellow-citizens, together with the confident tone of ultimate success which he supported, served to arouse the desponding, to fix the wavering, and confirm the brave. The extensive commercial and private correspondence which he maintained with England,

furnished him with early intelligence of all the measures resolved on by the British government, as well as the debates in parliament, and a large fund of private information of importance to this country. He habitually communicated these letters to a few select mercantile friends, who regularly assembled in the insurance-room of the Merchants' Coffee-House, and through them, the intelligence which they contained was diffused among the citizens. By these means he kept alive the spirit of opposition, instructed the people in the gradual progress of hostile movements, and enforced the conviction that the colonies could expect from the government but little alleviation of the oppressions and hardships against which they had, for a long time, most humbly, earnestly and eloquently remonstrated. This practice, which began previous to the suspension of the intercourse between the two countries, he continued during the war; and, through the medium of friends on the continent, especially in France and Holland, he received, for a time, the despatches which had previously come direct from England.

On the twentieth of February, 1781, Robert Morris was unanimously elected superintendant of finance. To offer a succinct view of the herculean task which this appointment imposed upon him, it is necessary to state, that he was required to examine into the situation of the public debts, expenditures, and revenue; to digest and report plans for improving and regulating the finances, and for establishing order and economy in the disbursement of the public money; to direct the execution of all plans adopted by congress respecting revenue and expenditure; to superintend the settlement of all public accounts; to direct and control all persons employed in procuring supplies for the public service, and in the expenditure of public money; to obtain accounts of all the issues of the specific supplies furnished

by the several states ; to compel the payment of all monies due to the United States, and in his official character, to prosecute in behalf of those states, for all delinquencies respecting the public revenue and expenditure ; and to report to congress the officers necessary for conducting the various branches of his department. By successive resolutions of congress, he was subsequently empowered to appoint and remove, at his pleasure, his assistants in his peculiar office ; as well as those persons, not immediately appointed by congress, as were officially intrusted with the expenditure of the public supplies ; to appoint agents to prosecute or defend for him in his official capacity ; to manage and dispose of the monies granted by his most christian majesty to the United States, and the specific supplies required from the several states ; to procure on contract all necessary supplies for the army, navy, artificers and prisoners of war ; to make provision for the support of the civil list ; to correspond with the foreign ministers of the United States upon subjects relating to his department ; and to take under his care and management, all loans and other monies obtained in Europe, or elsewhere, for the use of the United States. Such is a slight sketch of the duties which this office alone devolved on him, for it would be utterly impossible to enumerate the vast variety of measures in which he co-operated for the public benefit : while to trace him through all the acts of his financial administration, would involve the history of the last two years of the revolutionary war. When the exhausted credit of the government threatened the most alarming consequences ; when the army was utterly destitute of the necessary supplies of food and clothing ; when the military chest had been drained of its last dollar, and even the confidence of Washington was shaken ; Robert Morris, upon his own credit, and from his private resources, furnished those pecu-

niary means, without which all the physical force of the country would have been in vain.

On the thirteenth of March, the following letter, conveying his sentiments in relation to the high trust reposed in him was addressed to the president and submitted to congress.

“Sir—I had the honour to receive your excellency’s letter of the twenty-first of last month, enclosing the act of congress of the twentieth, whereby I am appointed, by an unanimous election of that honourable body, to the important office of “Superintendant of Finance.” Perfectly sensible of the honour done me by this strong mark of confidence from the sovereign authority of the United States, I feel myself bound to make the acknowledgments due, by pursuing a conduct formed to answer the expectations of congress, and promote the public welfare. Were my abilities equal to my desire of serving America, I should have given an immediate determination after this appointment was made; but, conscious of my own deficiencies, time for consideration was absolutely necessary. Little, however, of the time which has elapsed, have I been able to devote to this object, as the business before the legislature of Pennsylvania (wherein I have the honour of a seat,) has demanded, and continues to demand, my constant attendance.

“So far as the station of superintendant of finance, or indeed any other public station or office, applies to myself, I should, without the least hesitation, have declined an acceptance; for, after upwards of twenty years assiduous application to business as a merchant, I find myself at that period when my mind, body, and inclination, combine to make me seek for relaxation and ease. Providence had so far smiled on my endeavours as to enable me to prepare for the indulgence of those feelings, in such manner as would be least injurious

to the interests of my family. If, therefore, I accept this appointment, a sacrifice of that ease, of much social and domestic enjoyment, and of my material interests, must be the inevitable consequence: and, as my ambition was entirely gratified by my present situation and character in life, no motive of that kind can stimulate me to acceptance. Putting myself out of the question, the sole motive is the public good; and this motive, I confess, comes home to my feelings. The contest we are engaged in appeared to me, in the first instance, just and necessary; therefore I took an active part in it: as it became *dangerous*, I thought it the *more glorious*, and was stimulated to the greatest exertions in my power when the affairs of America were at the worst. Sensible of the want of arrangement in our monied affairs; the same considerations impel me to this undertaking, which I would embark in without hesitation, could I believe myself equal thereto; but fearing this may not be the case, it becomes indispensably necessary to make such stipulations as may give ease to my feelings, aid to my exertions, and tend to procure ample support to my conduct in office, so long as it is founded in, and guided by, a regard to the public prosperity.

“In the first place, then, I am to inform congress, that the preparatory steps I had taken to procure to myself relaxation from business with least injury to the interests of my family, were by engaging in certain commercial establishments with persons in whom I had perfect confidence, as to their integrity, honour, and abilities. These establishments I am bound in honour, and by contracts, to support to the extent agreed on. If, therefore, it be in the idea of congress, that the office of superintendant of finance is incompatible with commercial concerns and connexions, the point is settled; for I cannot, on any consideration, consent to violate engagements.

or depart from those principles of honour which it is my pride to be governed by. If, on the contrary, congress have elected me to this office under the expectation that my mercantile connexions and engagements were to continue, an express declaration of their sentiments should appear on the minutes, that no doubt may arise, or reflection be cast, on this score hereafter.

“I also think it indispensably necessary that the appointment of all persons who are to act in my office, (under the same roof, or in immediate connexion, with me,) should be made by myself; congress first agreeing that such secretaries, clerks, or officers, so to be appointed, are necessary, and fixing the salaries for each. I conceive that it will be impossible to execute the duties of this office with effect, unless the absolute power of dismissing from office; or employment, all persons whatever that are concerned in the official expenditure of public monies, be committed to the superintendant of finance; for, unless this power can be exercised without control, I have little hopes of efficacy in the business of reformation, which is probably the most essential part of the duty.— These being the only positive stipulations that occur to me at this time, the determination of congress thereon will enable me to determine whether to accept or decline the appointment. I must, however, observe that the act of congress of February, describing the duties of the superintendant of finance, requires the execution of many things for which adequate powers are not provided; and it cannot be expected that your officer can, in such case, be responsible. These, however, may be the subjects of future discussions.”

Some dissatisfaction was expressed in congress relative to the powers of appointment to, and dismissal from, office, claimed by Mr. Morris, and some affected to believe that they might be construed to comprehend the commander in chief,

and heads of departments. In a conference with the committee appointed to confer with him on the subject, Mr. Morris clearly and ably pointed out the necessity of the stipulations he had made: "the whole business of finance," he observed, "may be comprised in two short but comprehensive sentences, if I have proper notions on the subject; it is to raise the public revenues by such modes as may be most easy and most equal to the people, and to expend them in the most frugal, fair, and honest manner. In our case, the first part must ever be the business of congress, and the legislature of the respective states, because the powers of taxation cannot be delegated. The second is the most essential part of the duty of the superintendant of finance: he must ever have it in view to reduce the expenditures as nearly as possible to what in justice and in reason they ought to be; and to do this, he must be vested with power to dismiss from employment those officers he shall find unnecessary, unequal to their stations, inattentive to their duty, or dishonest in the exercise of it."

This difficulty being removed by the acquiescence of congress, with certain specified exceptions, in the views of Mr. Morris, he at length, on the fourteenth of May, formally accepted the honourable appointment, in the following communication to the president of congress.

"Sir—The honour conferred by congress in appointing me superintendant of finance, their several resolutions of the twentieth March, twenty-first and twenty-seventh of April, which your excellency has been pleased to transmit, and a serious conviction of that duty which every citizen owes to his country, especially in times of public calamity, will no longer permit me to hesitate about the acceptance of that office, although I must again repeat that I have the fullest sense of my own inability. I shall, however, strive to find such as-

assistance as will enable me, in some measure, to answer the reasonable expectations of congress, to whom I can promise for myself nothing more than honest industry. You will readily perceive that much time must be consumed in procuring proper officers, fixing on men for assistants whose abilities and integrity may be depended on, in laying plans for obtaining money with the greatest ease to the people, and expending it to the greatest advantage of the public, forming arrangements necessary to carry their plans into execution, and obtaining information as to the present state of things, in order that abuses may be, if possible, speedily and effectually remedied. Besides this, it will be necessary that I should confer with the commander in chief on the various expenditures of the war, and the means of retrenching such as are unnecessary. Let me add that the account of my private business must be adjusted, so as that all my affairs may be put into the hands of other persons, and subjected to their management. My necessary commercial connexions, notwithstanding the decided sense of congress expressed in their resolution of the twentieth March, might, if the business were transacted by myself, give rise to illiberal reflections equally painful to me, and injurious to the public. This reason alone would deserve great attention; but further I expect that my whole time, study, and attention, will be necessarily devoted to the various business of my department.

“Having thus stated some of the causes which will prevent me from immediately entering on the arduous task assigned me, I pray leave to call the attention of congress to the advanced season, and then I am persuaded their own good sense will render it unnecessary for me to observe that very little can be expected from my exertions during the present campaign: they will, therefore, easily perceive the propriety of the request I am to make, that the business may go on according to

the present arrangements, or such other as congress may devise until I can take it up, which I promise to do as speedily as possible. By this means I may be enabled so to dispose of the several members of my department as to form them into a regular system ; whereas, by throwing the whole immediately upon me, I shall be inevitably involved in a labyrinth of confusion from which no human efforts can ever afterwards extricate me.

“ Another consideration of great magnitude, to which I must also pray the attention of congress, is the present public debts. I am sure that no gentleman can hope that these should be immediately paid out of an empty treasury. If I am to receive and consider the application on that subject, if I am to be made responsible, that alone will, I fear, be full employment for the life of one man, and some other must be chosen to attend to the present, and provide for the future. But this is not all : if, from that or from any other cause, I am forced to commit a breach of faith, or even to incur the appearance of it, from that moment my utility ceases. *In accepting the office bestowed on me, I sacrifice much of my interest, my ease, my domestic enjoyments, and internal tranquillity. If I know my own heart, I make these sacrifices with a disinterested view to the service of my country. I am ready to go still further ;* AND THE UNITED STATES MAY COMMAND EVERY THING I HAVE, EXCEPT MY INTEGRITY, and the loss of that would effectually disable me from serving them more.

“ What I have to pray, then, is, that the adjustment of all past transactions, and of all that relates to the present system, may be completed by the modes already adopted, that whatever remains unpaid may become a funded debt, and that it may in that form be committed to me to provide for the yearly interest, and for the *eventual* discharge of the principal. This task I will cheerfully undertake, and if in the

progress of things, I am enabled to go further, with equal cheerfulness it shall be done ; but I must again repeat my serious conviction that the least breach of faith must ruin us for ever. It is not from vanity that I mention the expectations which the public seem to have formed from my appointment ; on the contrary, I am persuaded they are raised on a weak foundation, and I must lament them because I foresee that they must be disappointed. I must, therefore, entreat that no flattering prospect of immediate relief may be raised.

“ Congress well know that the public credit cannot be restored without method, economy, and punctual performance of contracts. Time is necessary to each ; and therefore, the removal of those evils we labour under can be expected from time only. To hold out a different idea would deceive the people, and consequently injure the public service.

“ I am sure it is unnecessary to add, before I close this letter, that I confidently expect my measures will meet with the fullest support from congress, so long as they are honestly directed to the general welfare. In this conviction, and with every sentiment of respectful attention, I have the honour, &c.”

At this period, a deep gloom enveloped the prospects of America, the darkness of which may be imagined from the summary presented by Washington at the commencement of his Military Journal, on the first of May, 1781. “ Instead of having magazines filled with provisions, we have a scanty pittance scattered here and there in the several states : Instead of having our arsenals well supplied with military stores, they are poorly provided, and the workmen all leaving them : Instead of having the various articles of field equipage ready to deliver, the quarter-master-general is but now applying to the several states (as the dernier ressort,) to provide these things for their troops respectively : Instead of having

a regular system of transportation established upon credit, or funds in the quarter-master's hand to defray the contingent expenses of it, we have neither the one nor the other; and all that business, or a great part of it, being done by military impressment, we are daily and hourly oppressing the people, souring their tempers, and alienating their affections: Instead of having the regiments completed to the new establishments, scarce any state in the union has, at this hour, one-eighth part of its quota in the field; and there is little prospect that I can see, of ever getting more than one half. In a word, instead of having every thing in readiness to take the field, we have nothing; and, instead of having the prospect of a glorious offensive campaign before us, we have a bewildered and gloomy prospect of a defensive one, unless we should receive a powerful aid of ships, land troops, and money, from our generous allies: and these at present are too contingent to build upon."

Such were the clouds which overshadowed the campaign of 1781; but they were dissipated by the resources and energy of Mr. Morris. Uniting great political talents with a degree of mercantile enterprise, information, and credit, seldom equalled in any country, and urged by the critical state of public affairs and the pressing wants of the army, he entered immediately on the duties of his office, without reference to the stipulation touching the prior arrangements of his mercantile affairs. The occasion required that he should bring his private credit in aid of the public resources, and pledge himself personally and extensively, for articles of the most absolute necessity, which could not be otherwise obtained. Condemning the system of violence and of legal fraud, which had too long been practised, as one which was calculated to defeat its own object, he sought the gradual restoration of confidence, by the only means which could restore it,—

a punctual and faithful compliance with the engagements he should make. Herculean as was this task, in the existing derangement of the American finances, he entered upon it with courage, and if not completely successful, certainly did more than could have been supposed practicable with the means placed in his hands. Incited by a penetrating and indefatigable mind, and supported by the confidence which his probity and punctuality, through the various grades of commercial pursuits, had established, he discarded, in this threatening conjuncture, considerations applying forcibly to his own reputation, and devoted his entire attention to the resuscitation of public credit. Promulgating his determination to meet every engagement with punctuality, he was sought with eagerness by all who had the means of supplying the public wants. The scene suddenly changed : faithfully performing his promise, the public deficiencies began to disappear, and military operations no longer were suspended by failure of the necessary means. Strong in his personal credit, and true to his engagements, the superintendant became every day stronger in the public confidence, and unassisted, except by a small portion of a small loan of six millions of livres tournois, granted by the court of Versailles to the United States, this individual citizen gave food and motion to the main army ; proving by his conduct, that credit is the offspring of integrity, economy, system, and punctuality.

When Mr. Morris assumed the duties of his office, the treasury was more than two millions and a half of dollars in arrear ; the greater part of this debt was of such a nature that the payment could neither be avoided nor delayed ; and Dr. Franklin was therefore under the necessity of ordering back from Amsterdam, money which had been sent thither for the purpose of being shipped to America : had he not taken this step, the bills of exchange drawn by congress must

have been protested, and the tottering credit of the government in Europe would have been wholly prostrated. Congress had now solemnly resolved to discontinue the emission of paper bills of credit, which had been carried to a ruinous but unavoidable extent: the zeal and public spirit of the people induced them at first to receive these bills as an equivalent for the precious metals; but not being, at will, convertible into gold and silver, and no fund being provided for their redemption, depreciation followed as a necessary result, and with it the loss of public credit. The fate of this enormous mass of continental currency is well known; for the distress produced by its rapid depreciation and final fall was felt through all the ramifications of society. Yet bad as this system of finance doubtless was in itself, it seems to be excusable if not absolutely necessary from the extreme exigency of the times; and perhaps without its aid, we might yet have been a British dependency. Individuals severely suffered by its rapid and great depreciation; but by it, the nation gained all its advances to freedom in the first years of the war. Its memory should be respected, although its fall was inglorious and unlamented. One solitary tribute only was paid to its services: it was buried with the honours of war, in Rhode Island, and a numerous procession attended the splendid repository of its remains, over which an eloquent eulogy, enumerating its services, was pronounced, as over those of a departed friend and benefactor. An emission of paper money, in lieu of the former, and called *red money*, had been issued by the state. When the obsequies of the departed benefactor were performed, a pithy orator held up a bundle of red money, and exclaimed, "be thou also ready; for thou shalt surely die;"—a prophecy that was soon after fulfilled. Our ancestors, by bearing the unequal burden of depreciation, saved the present generation from the necessity

of redeeming the paper debt; and we have, therefore, no cause to reprobate it.

The emission of bills on the credit of the colonies having ceased, requisitions on the states, which possessed the whole power of taxation, and continued to issue paper money, were substituted for the purpose of supplying the army with provisions; and they were required to furnish certain specified articles for the subsistence of the troops, according to a ratio established by congress. But this subsidy, in itself inadequate to the national necessity, was so shamefully neglected by the states, that the army was on the eve of dismemberment for want of food, and even the fortitude of Washington was shaken. Had it even been sufficient to answer the existing exigencies, it could not be considered as having accomplished its object, so long as the same disorder continued to reign in the public expenses. The exchequer suffered still less from the poverty of the revenues than from the prodigalities it had to supply. Congress had discovered that this primordial defect in the administration of the finances, was the source of those perpetual embarrassments which had beset them since the commencement of the revolution; and the appointment of a superintendant was the result of their firm resolution to introduce into that department a rigorous system of order and economy. It was necessary to select, for this important office, a man of high reputation, possessed of extensive knowledge and experience in financial affairs. These indispensable requisites were found in Robert Morris. His mind was active, his manners pure, his fortune ample, and his zeal for independence extremely ardent. If the charge imposed on him was ponderous, the talents and firmness with which it was sustained were no less astonishing. No other man in the community would, probably, have been competent to manage the great concerns which it involved; for no one

possessed the same happy expedient of raising supplies, nor enjoyed a greater share of the public confidence. He was not slow in substituting regularity for disorder, and good faith in the room of fraud. The first and most essential quality of an administrator being exactness in the fulfilment of his obligations, he adhered with rigour to an invariable punctuality. He soon gathered the fruit of this system: instead of a general distrust, there sprung up, by degrees, a universal confidence, and every one was ready to exclaim, in the words of Washington, "The abilities of the present financier have done wonders."

Public and private distress every where existed: the credit of the government was so far destroyed, as to form a foundation on which the enemy erected the most sanguine expectations of conquest: many public officers could not perform their duties, without payment of the arrears due from the treasury, and without immediate aid must have been imprisoned for debts which enabled them to live. The public treasury was reduced to so low an ebb, that some of the members of the board of war declared to Mr. Morris, they had not the means of sending an express to the army. Starvation threatened the troops; and the paper bills of credit had so far depreciated, that it required a burdensome mass to pay for an article of clothing. The gigantic efforts of the financier, however, dissipated these appalling prospects with an almost miraculous rapidity. To him it was principally owing that the armies of America did not disband; and that congress, instead of yielding to an inevitable necessity, recovered the means, not only of sustaining the efforts of the enemy, but of resuming the offensive with vigour and success.

The establishment of the Bank of North America was one of the first, and most prominent, acts in the administration of Mr. Morris; and but for this institution, his plans of fi-

nance must have been totally frustrated. Previous to the war, he had laid the foundation of a bank, and established a credit in Europe for the purpose of carrying the scheme into execution. His design, however, was defeated by the revolution, and he now devoted to the benefit of his country, the knowledge that he had acquired of the principles of banking, and of the advantages resulting to a commercial community from a well regulated bank, by enabling merchants, in cases of exigency, to anticipate their funds, and to take advantage of occasions which offered well grounded schemes of speculation. On the seventeenth of May, he submitted to the consideration of congress, his plan for establishing a national bank, accompanied with explanatory observations. "Anticipation of taxes and funds," he remarked, "is all that ought to be expected from any system of paper credit: this seems as likely to rise into a fabric equal to the weight, as any I have yet seen, or thought of; and I submit whether it may not be necessary and proper, that congress make immediate application to the several states to invest them with the powers of incorporating a bank, and for prohibiting all other banks or bankers in these states, at least during the war.?" The capital of the bank was established at four hundred thousand dollars, in shares of four hundred dollars each, payable in gold or silver. Twelve directors were to manage the affairs of the institution, who were empowered, under certain restrictions, to increase the capital of the bank. It was to be incorporated by the government, and be subject to the inspection of the superintendant of finance, with the privilege, at all times, of access to the books and papers. Such were the bases and principal features of the establishment. The utility to be derived from it was that the notes of the bank, payable on demand, should be declared legal money for the payment of all duties and taxes in each of the United

States, and receivable into the public treasury as gold or silver. This necessary and beneficial institution received the full approbation of congress, on the twenty-sixth of May : it was resolved, with the dissenting voice of Massachusetts alone, that the subscribers should be incorporated as soon as the subscriptions were filled ; that the several states should be requested to provide that no other banks, or bankers, should be established during the war ; that the notes of the

bank should be receivable in payment of all taxes, duties, and debts, due to the United States ; and that the several state legislatures should be earnestly required to pass laws, making it felony to counterfeit the notes of the bank.

In consequence of these resolutions, the plan of the bank was published by Mr. Morris, with a suitable and urgent address to the public. "To ask the end," he observed, "which it is proposed to answer by this institution of a bank, is merely to call the public attention to the situation of our affairs. A depreciating paper currency has unhappily been the source of infinite private mischief, numberless frauds, and the greatest distress. The national calamities have moved with an equal pace, and the public credit has received the deepest injury. This is a circumstance so unusual in a republican government, that we may boldly affirm it cannot continue a moment after the several legislatures have determined to take those vigorous and effectual measures, to which the public voice now loudly commands their attention. In the mean time, the exigencies of the United States require an anticipation of our revenues ; while, at the same time, there is not such confidence established as will call out, for that purpose, the funds of individual citizens. The use, then, of a bank, is to aid the government by their monies and credit, for which they will have every proper reward and security : to gain from individuals that credit which property, abilities,

and integrity, never fail to command; to supply the loss of that paper money, which becoming more and more useless, calls every day more loudly for its final redemption; and to give a new spring to commerce, in a moment when, by the removal of all restrictions, the citizens of America shall enjoy and possess that freedom for which they contend."

Mr. Morris, from motives of official duty, as well as the conviction of its utility, continued incessantly to promote the progress of this plan; but such was the public distress, and the gloomy prospect of public affairs, that, notwithstanding the zealous endeavours of individuals, the necessary sum was not subscribed until the year 1782; and it was some time after the business of the bank was fairly commenced, before the actual sum paid in by individual subscribers amounted to seventy thousand dollars. In the mean time the exertions of the financier were unremitting. He addressed a circular letter to the most influential men in the country, appealing to their characters and zeal, for their support, and requesting them in the most earnest manner to urge their friends and fellow citizens to become proprietors of the bank stock: "every subscriber," he observed, "will find his own interest benefited in proportion to the capital he deposits, and at the same time they will have the satisfaction to be considered, for ever, as the promoters of an institution that has been found beneficial to other countries, and inevitably must be so, in the highest degree, to this,—an institution that most probably will continue as long as the United States, and that will probably become as useful to commerce and agriculture, in the days of peace, as it must be to government during the war." "I ask you to devote some of your time to promote this infant plan; which, as it gathers strength, may in the end prove the means of saving the liberties, lives, and property, of the virtuous part of

America." In a communication to Mr. Jay, then minister at the court of Spain, he suggested the propriety of submitting the plan of the bank to that government, for the purpose of obtaining an advance of money for its support. "An additional reason," he remarked in this letter, "for the institution, is to supply the place of all other paper, which it is my design to absorb as soon as possible, and thereby relieve the people from those doubts and anxieties which

have weakened our efforts, relaxed our industry, and impaired our wealth." "Finally, one very strong motive which has impelled my conduct, on this occasion, is to unite the several states more closely together in one general money connexion, and indissolubly to attach many powerful individuals to the cause of our country, by the strong principle of self-interest." Mr. Morris was well aware that the capital of four hundred thousand dollars was very inadequate to the object which he had in view; but the fear that he would be unable to fill a larger subscription, and the conviction of the evil consequences that would result from the failure of the plan, induced him to limit it, in the first instance, to that sum: but his prospective views were more extensive. "It is weakness," he observed, "to be deterred by difficulties from a proper pursuit; I am, therefore, determined that the bank shall be *well* supported, until it can support itself, and then it will support us. I mean that the stock, instead of four hundred thousand dollars, shall be four hundred thousand pounds, and perhaps more. How soon it will rise to that amount it is impossible to foresee: but this we may venture to assert, that if a considerable sum of specie can speedily be thrown into it, the period when its force and utility will be felt and known is not far off." In the month of July, Mr. Morris endeavoured, by powerful but ineffectual arguments, to induce the governor of Havanna to furnish

him with four hundred thousand Mexican dollars, for bills on Paris, guaranteed by the French minister in America. His object was to double the capital of the bank by depositing this sum in its vaults, thereby facilitating the anticipation of taxes, and giving its operations such force as would draw the attention of the citizens, and induce them to afford it additional support. Previous to the election for directors, held on the first of November, 1781, he addressed a circular letter to the governors of the states, stating the distresses created by the want of a circulating medium, and urging the enactment of proper laws to promote the currency of the bills of the bank.

Mr. Morris, finding that it was impracticable to procure the whole amount of the capital from individual subscriptions, subscribed, on account of the United States, for stock to the amount of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars; and it was principally upon this fund, that the operations of the institution were commenced. Four hundred and fifty thousand dollars had been imported from France, and deposited in the bank, and he had determined, from the moment of its arrival to subscribe for those shares which remained vacant; but one half the sum was exhausted by the public expenditures before the institution could be organised. At length, on the thirty-first of December, 1781, a charter of incorporation was granted by congress, limiting the capital to ten millions of dollars. Messrs. Willing, Fitzsimmons, Nesbit, Wilson, Hill, Osgood, Cadwalader, Morris, Caldwell, Inglis, Meredith, Bingham, and Matlack, were appointed the directors, and Thomas Willing president of the board. On the same day, congress recommended to the several state legislatures to enact laws for facilitating the full operation of the institution; and on the seventh of January, 1782, the bank

was opened, and individuals began to deposit their money. Mr. Morris seized this occasion to renew his solicitations to the several state governors, relative to the passage of laws for the protection and promotion of the institution, the advantages of which he displayed in inviting colours: "It will facilitate," said he, "the management of the finances of the United States. The several states may, when their respective necessities require, and the abilities of the bank will permit, derive occasional advantages and accommodation from it. It will afford to the individuals of all the states a medium for their intercourse with each other, and for the payment of taxes, equally safe and more convenient than the precious metals. It will have a tendency to increase both the internal and external commerce of North America, and undoubtedly will be infinitely useful to all the traders of every state in the union; provided, as I have already said, it is conducted on the principles of equity, justice, prudence, and economy." On the first of April, 1782, the assembly of Pennsylvania agreed to, and passed, the state act of incorporation; Delaware pursued the same course, and other states enacted laws for the protection of the bank.

The country realized an extraordinary benefit from this institution, as it enabled Mr. Morris to use, by anticipation, the funds of the nation; a power of infinite value, when prudently and judiciously exercised. The sudden restoration of public and private credit, which took place on the establishment of the bank, was an event as extraordinary in itself, as any domestic occurrence during the progress of the revolution. Its first operations were greatly assisted by the arrival of a large sum, in specie, from Europe and the West Indies; and, although the subscriptions to the capital stock were not paid with punctuality, from the great scarcity of money, yet as the

subscribers were generally men of property, and liable to the full amount of their subscriptions, the directors of the bank were encouraged to proceed in the business.

The aid which the institution afforded to the country, in a period of great gloom and distress, was very extensive, considering its limited capital. Mr. Morris, as before stated, subscribed two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in his official capacity; but the finances were so much exhausted, that, in the following December, the bank was obliged to release the United States from their subscription, to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars; the remaining fifty thousand having been sold, by the superintendent, to individuals in Holland.

On the twelfth of January, 1782, in less than two weeks after the bank was opened, the directors loaned to the United States, - - - - -	\$100,000
In the month of February following, - - -	100,000
In the month of March following, - - -	100,000
In the month of June following, - - -	100,000
Making together the sum of - - - - -	\$400,000

In May, 1792, the state of Pennsylvania being unable to pay its quota of the public contribution, the bank lent it the sum of eighty thousand dollars; so that with a capital of three hundred thousand dollars, the bank actually advanced, for the public service, within six months after its organization, the sum of four hundred and eighty thousand dollars; and this will appear more extraordinary when it is recollected, that the heavy losses of individuals by the depreciation of the continental money, were then fresh in the public recollection, and occasioned such a distrust of every kind of paper engagements, that the circulation of bank notes was very

limited, and the bank could derive but little aid from them. These loans were not finally reimbursed until the first of January, 1784.

But the direct loans of the bank were not the only aid which it afforded. Considerable facilities were obtained by discounting the notes of individuals, and thereby anticipating the receipts of public money : besides which, the persons who had contracted for furnishing rations to the army were also aided with discounts, on the public credit. The credit and confidence that were revived by means of this institution, formed the basis of that system through which the anticipations made, within the bounds of the United States, had, upon the first day of July, 1783, exceeded eight hundred and twenty thousand dollars. If the sum due, indirectly, for the notes of individuals discounted be taken into consideration, the total will exceed ONE MILLION ! “ It may then,” says Mr. Morris, “ be not only asserted but demonstrated, that without the establishment of the national bank, the business of the department of finance could not have been performed.”

Besides these important benefits to the public cause, emanating from the bank, the state of Pennsylvania and city of Philadelphia were greatly accommodated by loans obtained from it. The state was thereby enabled to provide for the defence of the frontiers, and to relieve the officers of the Pennsylvania line from the distress resulting from a failure of the internal revenue, which had been mortgaged to pay the interest of the certificates granted to them for military services. By loans from the bank, the city authorities relieved the pressing wants of the capital, which suffered extremely from the exhausted state of its funds. The accommodations furnished to the citizens promoted internal improvements, imparted fresh vigour to trade, and greatly increased the circulating medium by the issue of bills, which, being convertible

at will into gold or silver, were universally received as equal thereto, and commanded the most unbounded confidence. Great numbers availed themselves of the security afforded by the vaults of the bank to deposit their cash, which, from the impossibility of investing it advantageously, had long been concealed. These events, together with the constant current of deposits in the course of trade, authorized the directors to increase their business to an unprecedented extent ; the consequence of which was a speedy and perceptible change in the state of affairs, both public and private.

The prosperity of the bank, and the success of his favourite scheme, proved highly grateful to the feelings of Mr. Morris : it was the first important operation in his financial career, and it speedily produced all the benefits which he had predicted. "The establishment of the national bank," he observes in a letter dated the twenty-fifth of March, 1782, "answers all the purposes expected from it, and even exceeds in success the most sanguine hopes that had been formed by its warmest advocates. As the operations of the bank become extended, the benefits of the institution will be felt to the extreme parts of the United States : their notes acquire every day a greater extent of circulation, and they have obtained the most perfect confidence hereabouts." But while the institution was thus rapidly invigorating the public credit, and promoting the public prosperity, ungenerous and base aspersions against its founder were disseminated throughout the continent, and many individuals unacquainted with the nature of the national bank, and the official connexions and transactions of Mr. Morris, entertained the most illiberal ideas of the increase of his private fortune. He at length condescended, in a letter of the first of May, 1782, to notice these false and slanderous accusations. "The bank," he remarks, "is a mere private thing, in which any man may be

interested who chooses to purchase stock. Personally, I have no other concern in it than any other gentleman may have, who pleases to invest his property in it. The government have nothing to do with the bank, except merely to prevent the directors, should they be so inclined, from extending their operations in a manner disproportionate to their capital, and thereby endangering their credit. Any aid which the government derives from the bank is by lodging proper securities with them, and borrowing money for short periods on the discount of interest, at the rate of six per cent. which is receiving ninety-nine, and paying a hundred, at the end of two months. The monies so borrowed are punctually repaid. By accepting the office which I now hold, I was obliged to neglect my own private affairs. I have made no speculations in consequence of my office, *and instead of being enriched, I am poorer this day than I was a year ago.*"

At the commencement of the year 1781, when the overwhelming distress of the army had driven congress, and the commander in chief, almost to desperation, Mr. Morris, on his own private credit, supplied the suffering troops with several thousand barrels of flour. He thus prevented the design which had been contemplated by congress of authorising general Washington to seize all the provisions that could be found within twenty miles of his camp : the sanction of this procedure by congress would have proved extremely detrimental to the cause of the country ; and it was avoided solely through the private credit and resources of the financier. In a letter to Thomas Lowrey, of New Jersey, on this subject, dated twenty-ninth of May, 1781, he makes the following remarks and assurances : " It seems that general Washington is now in the utmost necessity for some immediate supplies of flour, and I must either undertake to procure them, *or the laws of necessity must be put in force, which I shall*

ever study to avoid and prevent. I must therefore request that you will immediately use your best skill, judgment, and industry, in purchasing, on the lowest terms you can, one thousand barrels of sweet, sound flour, and in sending it forward to camp in the most expeditious and least expensive manner that you can contrive. To obtain this flour readily and on good terms, I know you must pledge your private credit, and as I have not the money ready, although the means of raising it are in my power, I must also pledge myself to you, which I do most solemnly, as an officer of the public; but lest you should, like some others, believe more in private than in public credit, I hereby pledge myself to pay you the cost and charges of this flour in hard money." "I will enable you most honourably to fulfil your engagements. My character, utility, and the public good, are much more deeply concerned in doing so than yours is."—In a letter of the same date, addressed to major general Schuyler, the disinterestedness and purity of his exertions for the public benefit are equally apparent. "You will probably have heard," he writes, "that congress have done me the honour to bestow their confidence by appointing me to the important station of superintendant of the finances of North America; a station that makes me tremble when I think of it, and which nothing could tempt me to accept but a gleam of hope that my exertions may possibly retrieve this poor distressed country from the ruin with which it is now threatened, merely for want of system and economy in expending, and vigour in raising, the public monies. Pressed by all my friends, acquaintance, and fellow citizens, and still more pressed by the *necessity*, the *absolute necessity*, of a change in our monied system, to work salvation, I have yielded, and taken a load on my shoulders which it is not possible to get clear of, without the faithful support and assistance of those

good citizens who not only wish, but will promote, the service of the country. In this light, I now make application to you, sir, whose abilities I know; and whose zeal I have every reason to believe. The object, however, before me, is not of such magnitude as to require any great exertion of either, at present, although it is of sufficient importance to induce the invocation. General Washington is distressed for want of an immediate supply of flour, and as I am not even yet fairly entered in the execution of my office, and when I do, have to meet an empty treasury and a totally exhausted credit, it must be some time before funds can be created, or money be commanded for any purpose whatever. I must, therefore, request that you will take the most speedy and effectual measures to deliver to the order of his excellency, general Washington, one thousand barrels of flour. I have the means of raising hard money to pay for this flour, and the charges on it; but the longer time I am allowed to do it, the more I can consult the public interest. I take it for granted that you can, upon your own credit and engagements, either borrow the money, for a few months, necessary to accomplish this business, or that you can make the purchases on such credit, without giving higher prices; and for your reimbursement you may either take me as a public or a private man; for I pledge myself to repay you with hard money wholly, if required, or part hard, part paper, if so you transact the business. In short, I promise, and you may rely that no consideration whatever shall induce me to make a promise that I do not see my capability to perform, that I will enable you to fulfil your engagements for this supply of flour: if you find it convenient you may draw on me for hard money, or paper, payable in such sums, and at such times as you can conceive may not be inconvenient, judging by what I have said on this subject." In informing the commander in chief of these ar-

rangements, he observes, that the distress of his army for want of bread had been made known to him by a committee of congress: "I found myself," he continues, "immediately impressed with the strongest desire to afford you relief. Not being prepared, in my official character, with funds or means of accomplishing the supplies you need, I have written to major-general Schuyler, and to Thomas Lowrey, of New Jersey, requesting their immediate exertions to procure, upon their own credit, one thousand barrels of flour each, and to send the same forward in parcels, as fast as procured, to camp, deliverable to your excellency's order; and I have pledged myself to pay them in hard money, for the cost and charges, within a month, six weeks, or two months. I shall make it a point to provide the money, being determined never to make an engagement that cannot be fulfilled; for if, by any means, I should fail in this respect, I will quit my office as useless from that moment."—Thus, by a liberal use of his private credit, he afforded food to, and restored order in, the army, at a period when starvation and mutiny stalked hand in hand throughout the ranks.

In the same year, the talents and integrity of Mr. Morris attracted an honourable mark of confidence from the legislature of Pennsylvania, by his appointment as the agent of the state, to meet the requisitions of congress. At this period, the occasional separation of the army was inevitable, in order to obtain daily food. Although the eastern states took effectual measures to provide and transport all the necessary supplies in their power, which consisted of meat, salt, and liquor; yet bread was still wanting, and this was only procurable, to any extent, in Pennsylvania and Maryland, as the states of New York and New Jersey, which had been, from the year 1776, the continued seat of war, were completely exhausted. Pennsylvania, a country abounding in wheat, was indeed

that from which was drawn the greater part of the supplies of flour for the use of the army. The want of money had occasioned, towards the beginning of 1781, an extreme slowness in the delivery of these supplies, and there was reason to apprehend a continuance of the most distressing disappointments in this essential article. After having relieved the wants of the moment, by his private credit, Mr. Morris proposed, and undertook, to furnish all the specific requisitions made by congress on Pennsylvania, during the current year, on receiving, as a reimbursement, the taxes imposed by a law which had been recently enacted. On the twenty-fifth of June, the contract was agreed to by the assembly of the state, and on the sixth of July following, congress passed a resolution approving of the transaction, as having a tendency to promote the public service of the United States. Thus were supplies, which the government found itself incapable of furnishing, raised by an individual. This masterly negotiation involved, in the aggregate, a sum exceeding one million, one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. The supplies were furnished in anticipation, before the money was obtained from the state treasury; and while he thus enabled the state promptly to comply with the demands of congress, his plan of operations was more economical than any other which, under the then state of things, could have been adopted. The state of parties, at that period, in Pennsylvania, rendered this appointment peculiarly flattering to Mr. Morris, and highly expressive of the respect universally entertained for his capacity and integrity. Political feuds, principally arising from a difference of opinion respecting the state constitution of 1776, extensively prevailed, and the conduct of the ruling party, which was opposed to any change in that feeble instrument, was, on many occasions, unintelligent and illiberal. Mr. Morris was regarded as the head of what it was

their pleasure to term the aristocratic party ; that is, of that portion of men of wealth, great public consideration, superior education, and liberal ideas, who ardently desired a more energetic form of government than could exist under a single legislature, and numerous executive council. Could the legislature have dispensed with his services, or had there been any man among the party in power capable of fulfilling the trust, it is probable that he would not have received the appointment. That man, however, did not exist. The manner in which it was executed by Mr. Morris, showed how well he merited the confidence of the legislature, as well as a skilfulness of management which no one but himself could have effected.

The following letter, addressed to the president of Pennsylvania, on the twenty-third of August, 1781, will exhibit the immense advances made by Mr. Morris on account of that state.

“Sir—I have this day settled an account with Thomas Smith, esq. the loan-officer, and have his receipt for one hundred and fifty-four thousand and seventy-four dollars, and seventy-six-ninetieths, on account of the four-tenths of the new emissions due by this state to congress. As yet, I have not drawn one shilling from the treasury of Pennsylvania ; and am, of consequence, so much in advance. There still remains due to Mr. Smith, on these four-tenths, a balance of two hundred and thirty-five thousand, nine hundred and twenty-five dollars and fourteen-ninetieths. Those who have the warrants on him for this money are clamorous to obtain payment.

“I had procured, on account of Pennsylvania, a considerable quantity of flour. In the state of New York, one thousand barrels ; in the state of New Jersey, four thousand barrels ; and in this city, four thousand barrels. For all these I ob-

tained credit; and with respect to the last, not finding consumption for it here, I have lately made payment of part, by the re-delivery of three thousand three hundred and ninety barrels; which was a desirable circumstance: first, because the consumption of that article was, and probably would be, in places where it could be so purchased as to save on the transportation; secondly, because the risk of spoiling, or other loss, which I began to apprehend, was not incurred; and thirdly, because, as this article would probably fall in price, it might be procured hereafter on easy terms. My reasons for purchasing in New York and New Jersey were, that there would be a saving in the carriage, which is a benefit to the United States, and that there would also be a saving in the price, which is a benefit to this state. From what has been said, then, your excellency will perceive, that my credit stands pledged for five thousand six hundred and ten barrels of flour. Some of the payments have already become due, and I have found means to satisfy them. The rest will shortly be so, which will create new difficulties. Had I drawn money from the state treasury at the time when the purchases were made, I must have exchanged it for specie. The rate, at those times, was from five to six, and even seven, for one; but whenever it should have been known that it was drawn from the treasury and sold on public account, in all human probability it would have depreciated still more. The credit, therefore, which I have obtained has been beneficial, by giving time for that change of opinion which could alone operate an appreciation. Had the collection of taxes taken place as early as I was induced to believe it would, the paper would now be nearly, if not entirely, equal to specie: but at the present rate of exchange, it will require from eighty to a hundred thousand dollars to fulfil my engagements for this flour.

“The payments on my contracts for rations will shortly commence, and your excellency, from the former expenditures at the several posts, will be able to form a more adequate idea than I can, what those payments will amount to. To all this I must add that I have every reason to believe that other considerable supplies from this state will soon become indispensable; and of consequence, the most urgent demand for money be immediately created. I have also engaged, if his excellency general Washington should obtain a quantity of flour, to be delivered on the North River, to the use of the army, as part of this state's quota of supplies, to repay the same quantity of flour to his order here, or on the Chesapeake, as he may direct.

“I have thought it proper to make this full communication, that the supreme executive of the state may be informed of what is passing in their affairs. You will clearly perceive that my situation is far from agreeable; yet, such as it is, I will struggle under it, and adopt every expedient which may probably afford relief; being determined not to draw money from the treasury, until the interest of the state shall invite, or inevitable necessity compels me to it.”

The appreciation of the state paper, alluded to in this letter, was one of the first benefits derived from the administration of Mr. Morris. It was a leading object to restore the paper money of Pennsylvania to its specified value, because the legislature had assigned it as a fund for the purchase of specific supplies, required by congress, when they appointed the superintendant of finance their agent for that purpose. The paper in question was raised from so low a rate as six for one, to that of two for one; and it would have been brought nearly, if not entirely, to par, had not some measures intervened which, though well intended, were not judicious. Indeed, an operation of this kind is so delicate, that the least

derangement or interference is liable to prove fatal. The plan adopted by him was to make all his negotiations in paper money, by selling bills of exchange for that purpose, and afterwards paying it at a smaller rate of depreciation than that by which it was received ; and, at each successive operation, the rate was lowered by accepting it on the same terms, for bills of exchange, at which it had been previously paid. It was never applied to the purchase of the specific supplies, because it was checked in the progress towards par, and therefore, if it had been paid out in any quantity from the treasury, those who received it would have suffered by the consequent depreciation. Had the measures determined on for calling it in been pursued, it might again have risen in value, so that the state would have been obliged to redeem at par, what had been issued at one half. "In a word," Mr. Morris remarks, in his statement relative to the finances, "the view of those evils which inevitably follow from the issuing of paper money, and which always have attended that measure in a greater or smaller degree, rendered it most advisable to purchase for the state with specie, and supply the want of cash by the use of credit, until sufficient funds could be raised by the taxes then levying."

The services rendered by Mr. Morris to the southern army, under the command of general Greene, were as extensive as the embarrassed state of the finances would permit, notwithstanding the contrary assertions in Johnson's life of that officer. This writer, with a partiality which every sentiment of gratitude condemns ; with a want of dignity inimical to the principles which ought to actuate the correct biographer ; and with a negligence in the statement of facts which essentially detracts from the authority of his compilation ; labours incessantly to lessen the merits of the financier, and to defame the memory, and disparage the services,

of a man, without whose exertions all the physical force of the country would have proved unavailing. The slanders which operated to the detriment of the financier during his life were promptly and easily repelled, when he condescended to notice them at all; and it is the duty of those who survive, and who are impressed with the immense benefits which resulted from his indispensable exertions, to resist every outrage on his character, whether it consist in secret suggestion or open accusation. All the calumnies heaped upon Mr. Morris, from the charges exhibited by Mr. Laurens, on the floor of congress, in 1779, down to the publication of Mr. Johnson, in 1822, could be readily and substantially refuted. But a vast difference exists between the first and last accusations: the honourable and noble minded Laurens brought the transaction, which has been already mentioned, before the national council, in order to afford to Mr. Morris the most secure and solid means of vindicating his character. The only motive which could cause the remarks of Mr. Johnson appears to have been the desire of exalting his hero at the expense of the financier. The gallant Greene needed no borrowed plumes.

The mode of supplying general Greene with funds was a prominent cause of hostility. That distinguished officer, in the campaign of 1781, in South Carolina, fully justified the favourable opinion entertained of him by general Washington. His troops bore every hardship and privation, with a patience and constancy which deserved to be held up for universal admiration. Their situation was frequently deplorable in the extreme. At one period, there were three hundred men without arms, and more than one thousand so naked that they could only be put on duty in cases of a desperate nature. They had been, during the whole winter, in want of arms and clothing; their subsistence was wretched, and they had

neither rum nor any kind of spirits. The difficulties of the army were so numerous, and its wants so pressing, that general Greene experienced the most painful anxieties and embarrassments; and it is merely necessary to mention, in illustration of the nature of his services, that he was actually seven months in the field without taking off his clothes. "At the battle of Eutaw Springs," he remarks, "hundreds of my men were as naked as they were born. Posterity will scarcely believe that the bare loins of many brave men who carried death into the enemy's ranks, at the Eutaw, were galled by their cartouch-boxes, while a folded rag, or a tuft of moss, protected the shoulders from sustaining the same injury from the musket."

! The unhappy state of affairs in the southern department, the total inability of the financier to relieve these distresses, and the employment by him of a confidential agent to attend the southern army, and supply, at seasons of extreme want, certain small sums to general Greene, for particular purposes, are the foundation of the charges preferred against Mr. Morris relative to his neglect of that army. Nothing could be more unjust and ungrateful than to attack, at such a perilous moment, the character of a man, who had saved the finances of the country from total destruction, by the energy of his conduct, the comprehensiveness of his plans, and the devotion of his private property and credit to the one great and gigantic object. It is stated by Marshall, that "the distresses of the southern army, like those of the north, were such that it was often difficult to keep them together. That he might relieve them when in the last extremity, and yet not diminish the exertions made to draw support from other sources, by creating an opinion that any supplies could be drawn from him, Mr. Morris employed an agent to attend the southern army as a volunteer, whose powers were un-

known to general Greene. This agent was instructed to watch its situation, and whenever it appeared impossible for the general to extricate himself from his embarrassments, to furnish him, on his pledging the faith of the government for repayment, with a draft on the financier for such a sum as would relieve the urgency of the moment. Thus was Greene frequently rescued from impending ruin, by aids which appeared providential, and for which he could not account." Now, instead of enlogizing the extraordinary exertions of the financier, which thus enabled him, at the last emergency, to extend his saving arm over almost the whole extent of the country, Mr. Johnson avers that this conduct, to one who did not merit it, must be acknowledged to be most uncandid and illiberal: it will be presently shown, that whatever his biographer may please to think, general Greene himself entertained a totally different opinion. It is asserted by that writer, that he is at a loss to imagine who this agent could have been, and that the only evidence to support Mr. Marshall exists in the clearly substantiated fact, that "general Greene was most unmercifully pinched and cramped in the article of cash by the financier." This mysterious agent was George Abbot Hall, a gentleman of great worth and honour, and receiver of continental taxes for the state of South Carolina: he was appointed to this responsible and arduous office on the eighteenth of January, 1782. In a letter of the same date, addressed to Mr. Hall, Mr. Morris remarks, touching the wants of the southern army, that "if proper measures are pursued by the southern states, it will then be in my power, as already it is my inclination, to give more effectual relief. For if such laws were passed as would insure the very speedy collection of hard money in taxes, I might, consistently with my duty, make immediate expenditures of hard money on contracts,

and otherwise, so y facilitate the payment of those taxes." In he observes, that "it is possible that such cir y turn up as that a little hard money may be of use to general Greene. No person, who is not in y acquainted with my situation, can imagine of he equence is every shilling which I part with: but, nding this is the case, and that I am precluded fr g advances in those states who do not tax, as I have already mentioned, yet you may, on the contingencies already stated, make such small advances to general Greene as you c spare, and he may stand greatly in need of." It was im sible that Mr. Morris, by his individual resources, could operly maintain an army in a distant country, when the very states which it was defending from invasion, refused or delayed to pass laws for the collection of the revenue required by congress; nor could he, in conformity with his duty, leave those states destitute, by draining them of their resources, which had already experienced all the privations and desolations of war, and were yet willing to contribute their just quotas for the general defence. But even if positive necessity had overruled these objections, a reason still existed for not fully supplying general Greene with money which ought certainly to satisfy the most unreasonable,—and that was the impossibility of doing it; a fact which shall be fully substantiated, when we examine the accusations and animosity against Mr. Morris, which teem throughout the writings of Mr. Johnson. He acknowledges that "Mr. Robert Morris had acquired a high reputation in the United States, for the intelligence and effect with which he conducted their financial affairs;" and after noting the remarkable and rare fact, that "his services were unquestionably great," he qualifies the condescending eulogium by observing, that he entered upon the office at a

time highly favourable to the acquirement of reputation. The arguments by which this assertion is supported are extremely curious and logical. In the first place, Mr. Johnson syllogistically maintains, in substance, that when the public credit of a country is entirely prostrate, it can fall no further; that the United States was in that situation; and that therefore it was impossible for the financier not to acquire applause if he effected any thing at all, however inadequate to the public exigencies. In the second place, he declares, that as the bubble that had occupied the place of property had now burst, it was necessary that a solid medium should find its way into the country from abroad, or out of individual hoards at home, instead of the factitious representative which had recently melted from the hand that held it. But, he continues, the stream would have been slow in filling the vacuum, or must have been laved out as fast as it entered, had it not been for the actual introduction of a large sum in specie from France, and the substitution of a powerful army and navy from the same quarter, for the swarms of militia, which must have been otherwise employed. In the third place, he remarks, that although the science of banking was in its infancy in America, yet Mr. Morris knew how to avail himself of this great art, of placing capital at the disposal of mercantile intelligence, and its sister art or abuse, of dazzling the public eye by the same piece of coin, multiplied by a thousand reflectors. All these causes, are produced to depreciate the merits of Mr. Morris, who, it is said, was appointed to the office of financier at the moment when they began to operate.

Now, the prostrate state of the finances at the commencement of Mr. Morris's administration, so far from lessening the value of his services, is, without the least doubt, the very basis on which his fame is founded; the resuscitation of public

credit is the very key-stone of his financial celebrity. But this fact, we trust, has been already made too apparent, in the course of these pages, to require further observation: it is, indeed, a novel method of reasoning to depreciate the merits of Mr. Morris in restoring public confidence, because, if he did any thing, he must necessarily have improved it, as it could not be in a worse state. As to the second cause, the funds procured at that moment, from the French government, might be compared to a drop of water cast into the ocean.

The total amount was little more than one million three hundred thousand dollars, of which he received only a small portion; and had the entire grant been placed at his disposal, it would have lasted, according to the annual rate of the expenditures of the United States, at the time he attempted their regulation, not more than a month. If the "factitious representative," to which Mr. Johnson alludes, is intended to designate continental bills, Mr. Morris was uniformly and strongly opposed to paper emissions; if it means the paper issues of Mr. Morris as financier, they were equitably redeemed to the uttermost farthing; and it is obvious to all those at all acquainted with the necessities and feelings of the time, that no other mode could have been adopted to revive public credit, and to carry on the war. When the paper of congress, of the representatives of united America, was worth nothing, the paper of Robert Morris supplied the deficiency, and saved the country. The "vacuum" found by him in the public treasury, could not have been lessened by the whole grant of six millions of livres from France, because, when his official duty commenced, the treasury was more than two and a half millions of dollars in arrears. The slowness with which funds flowed into the treasury, notwithstanding the incessant entreaties and remonstrances of the financier, would have marred all hopes of success in the war, had not the shameful neglect

on the part of the several states been remedied by the private credit, the immense resources, and the gigantic abilities of Mr. Morris. In a letter to general Greene, dated the third of October, 1781, he thus unfolds the state of their finances. "To give you an idea of my situation as to money, I think I need only inform you that since I have been in office, I have received the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, Pennsylvania money, from the treasury of this state, and that is in part payment of advances made for them. *This is all I have received from the funds of America.* It is true that colonel Laurens has lately arrived, and brought with him a sum of money from France. (This occurred nearly eight months after his appointment.) And it is also true that I have made use of a very limited credit given me on France, by drawing bills of exchange; but both these resources taken together are vastly short of what is necessary. I have lost no occasion of showing to the several states their situation, but hitherto without success, and unless some unforeseen event turns up very speedily, it is impossible to say what may be the consequences. However, it is our business to hope all things, and that providence, who has hitherto carried us through our difficulties, will, I trust, continue his protection." His solicitations to the governors of the states, whose defalcation absolutely rendered it impossible to relieve the necessities of the troops, were unceasing, and the firmness, energy, and even imprudence, which characterized them, when he discovered that simple requests were disregarded, may be gathered from the following circular, issued on the sixteenth of May, 1782.

"Sir—I have heretofore taken occasion to observe, that the former expenditures of the United States were at a medium rate of twenty millions of dollars, annually, for the support of the war. In the present moment, (while labouring

under a large debt,) only eight millions have been asked for. It is evident, therefore, that the sum now required is as little as can possibly answer the purpose. I venture to say that it is not enough. According to the estimates of the year 1782, which were laid before congress by the late board of war, the present establishment of the army would require for pay, exclusive of the half pay, near three millions and a half; for rations, near two millions and a half; for clothing, about

twelve hundred thousand; for forage, above three hundred thousand; for the quartermaster's department, (exclusive of articles on hand,) above eight hundred thousand; for military stores, (exclusive of articles on hand,) near two hundred thousand; and for the hospitals, (exclusive of medicine, and also of sundry stores on hand,) above one hundred thousand. If to all these be added the sum of four hundred thousand for the departments of the pay office, commissary of prisoners, and the various other contingencies of service, which naturally and necessarily arise, without mentioning the losses which happen in war, here will be an aggregate amount of nine millions, and in this sum nothing is estimated for the interest of our debts, for the marine and for the civil list, and for the department of foreign affairs. Of the various expenditures, much was to be provided immediately. The heavy article of clothing, for instance, was indispensable. Many things were to be provided early, in order that the army might operate, and the subsistence is to be paid for regularly and constantly. Yet the states have not been asked for any money before the first day of April, and I appeal to them all, whether the supplies of money they have afforded me for the last year were such as would enable me to provide for the present.

"A three months' expenditure was permitted by congress to elapse before the first payment of two millions was asked

from the states; but what have they done?—While I write this letter, near two months more are gone for ever, and a dishonourable neglect endangers our country. Little local objects have postponed those measures which are essential to our existence, so that the most fatal consequences are now suspended but by a thread. Should they fall on our heads, *this solemn protest shall point to the real cause of our calamities.* I write, sir, to apprise you of the public danger, and to tell you I shall endeavour to fulfil those engagements which I have already made, that I may quit my station like an honest man. But I will make no new engagements; so that the public service must necessarily stand still. What the consequences may be, I know not; but the fault is in the states. They have not complied with the requisitions of congress. They have not enabled me to go on. They have not given me one shilling for the service of the year 1782, excepting only the state of New Jersey, from which I received five thousand five hundred dollars a few days ago, and this is all that has come to my hands out of two millions which were asked for.—Now, sir, should the army disband, and should scenes of distress and horror be reiterated and accumulated, I again repeat that I am guiltless, for the fault is in the states: they have been deaf to the calls of congress, to the clamours of the public creditors, to the just demands of a suffering army, and even to the reproaches of the enemy, who scoffingly declare that the American army is fed, paid, and clothed, by France. That assertion, so dishonourable to America, was true; but the kindness of France has its bounds, and our army, unfed, unpaid, and unclothed, will have to subsist itself, or disband itself.

“This language may appear extraordinary, but at a future day, when my transactions are laid bare to public view, it will be justified:—this language may not consist with the

ideas of dignity which some men entertain ; but, sir, dignity is in duty and virtue, not in the sound of swelling expressions. Congress may dismiss their servant, and the states may dismiss congress ; but it is by rectitude alone that man can be respectable—I have borne with delays and disappointments as long as I could, and nothing but hard necessity would have wrung from me the sentiments which I have now expressed. **I have early declared our situation as far as prudence would permit, and I am now compelled to transgress the bounds of prudence, by being forced to declare, that unless vigorous exertions are made to put money into the treasury, we must be ruined."**

The details which have been afforded relative to the establishment, and indispensable services of the bank of North America, will, no doubt, to a rational mind, be sufficient of themselves to show the invincible necessity which existed at that time, of "dazzling the public eye by the same piece of coin, multiplied by a thousand reflectors." Without an operation of this nature, the office of financier had as well been abolished ; but as Mr. Johnson has only afforded a general view of what he considers an abuse, it may be proper to present the details. Mr. Morris, in order to remove the doubts and hesitations which attended the first emission of his notes, established a kind of private bank, under the care of Mr. John Swanwick. Here were displayed great piles of specie dollars ; and all notes presented for payment were at once discharged. Very soon after this prompt payment became known, little demand was comparatively made on Mr. Swanwick's banking establishment : many persons, on their way to exchange notes for specie, returned home without presenting them, on seeing those who had been at the ostensible bank barthened with dollars. Many others, finding the specie cumbrous, returned, and redemanded their notes, being satis-

fied that they could always receive their specie amount. Now this bank was, in its commencement, supported by loans of specie from all Mr. Morris's friends, who possessed it, in sums, large or small, as each individual could furnish. When the duty of the dollars at the bank had been performed, they were returned to their owners, to be called out again either for show or real service. He contrived the machinery so admirably, that no failure in returning loans ever occurred. The amount of specie used in this fortunate and indispensable operation to fascinate public opinion, was surprisingly small. Thus did he lull the timid, and animate the patriotic, whose wishes exhilarated their confidence. Specie was now frequently carried to the bank, and notes taken for remittances to distant parts of the country. This, with other fortuitous supplies, and the management of the financier and his agents, increased the credit of the notes, and when the first impressions were fixed, few or no difficulties were experienced in their circulation. But while we thus far support what Mr. Johnson considers an offence, it is not intended to point out this occurrence as a primary support to Mr. Morris's credit, which was paramount to such secondary auxiliaries. It would be an insult to the understanding of the merest tyro in public affairs, to enter into a formal defence of the conduct of the financier at that important crisis; it is enough merely to state, that the safety of the country depended on the circulation of his notes, and the circulation of his notes depended on public confidence in Mr. Morris, both as a private individual and as an officer. As the former, it was vast and unsullied; as the latter, the defalcation of the government, so fresh in the memory of the people, rendered it expedient to resort to those modes which are, in a greater or less degree, necessary in all extensive money operations.

To return to Mr. Hall, the secret agent with the southern army; we find that he is at length noticed by judge Johnson,

who frequently remarks, that Mr. Morris "actually confided some of his hard guineas to Mr. George Abbott Hall, to be expended mysteriously," and justly presumes that "he held a secret military chest, in miniature, for the use of the army." Mr. Hall, according to his instructions, refused to supply large demands for money, which refusal to general Greene, (who, in fact, finally obtained it,) proves extremely galling to his biographer, who seizes the occasion to distort the language said to have been used by Mr. Morris, that every shilling in the hands of Mr. Hall was to him worth pounds. Judge Johnson presumes that this great profit was to arise from the purchase of his own notes, or those of his bank, at a depreciated value; while, in fact, it was a mode of expression by which he intimated the connexion which those funds had with the currency of his notes, and the immense value of the funds in the hands of Mr. Hall in carrying his grand financiering system into effect: if the funds intended to redeem from circulation all notes presented for payment, were permitted to be directed into other channels, the plans and credit of Mr. Morris would have fallen together. If general Greene had known that a certain relief could, in failure of all other resources, have been obtained from Mr. Hall, his exertions must inevitably, and according to every experience of human nature, have relaxed; and this relaxation would have proved as certainly injurious to the country, because it was absolutely impossible, at that time, to furnish sums to any considerable amount.

To advert to the general charge of neglecting to supply Greene's army, it may reasonably be asked in what manner it was to be effected? Mr. Morris used every exertion to effect that object, and incessantly lamented the dilatory and shameful conduct of the states, which refused to comply with the recommendations of congress for an impost of five per

cent., and delayed all supplies both specific and in money. A few extracts from the letters of the financier to general Greene will not only portray this matter in its proper light, but also the warm and confidential friendship which existed between the parties. On the tenth of September, 1781, he observes : " While I congratulate you on the many successes which you have obtained under every disadvantage, let me also congratulate you on the just sense of your merit which is now generally diffused. The superintendant of finance, circumstances as the American superintendant is, must give the fullest applause to an officer who finds in his own genius an ample resource for the want of men, money, clothes, arms, and supplies. I have made another attempt to place some money in your hands, by requesting the lieutenant-governor and council of South Carolina to pay you, when convenient, five hundred pounds this currency, advanced by order of congress to them, their state being accountable." On the fourteenth of September, 1781, he writes : " In my former letter, I mentioned that his excellency, governor Rutledge, would pay you any money he might receive for subscriptions to the national bank. Herein you will find a bill drawn by the honourable John Matthews, esq. this date, at ten days sight, on Charles Drayton, esq. for one hundred and seventy-three specie dollars. Major Burnet will also receive some money and stores for your department, to which I give all the facility in my power. I can with truth assure you, I have every disposition to provide for those things that are really necessary to the use of the army." On the third of October, 1781, after describing the low state of the treasury, he observes, " your circumstances have long been arduous, but you have hitherto risen so superior to them, that we should be almost as much surprised now if you were not successful, as we formerly were at your successes. I wish I could contri-

bute to render you more easy. As far as my abilities extend, I shall do it most cheerfully, but they, unfortunately, are very limited. Accept, I pray you, my good wishes, which are almost all I have to give." On the second of November, 1781, he uses the following language: "I hope it is unnecessary to make assurances of my disposition to render your situation both easy and respectable. I am sure it is unnecessary to remark, how inadequate the provisions have been, which the states have hitherto made : at least, it is unnecessary to you. Much less need I display the detail of expenditures which have been requisite for the accomplishment of that happy event which has taken place in Virginia. I have neither forgotten nor neglected your department. I have done the utmost to provide clothing, arms, accoutrements, medicines, hospital stores, &c. and I flatter myself you will derive, through the different departments, both benefit and relief from my exertions. *I have detained captain Pierce a day, in order to make up, with infinite difficulty, one thousand pounds, Pennsylvania currency, in gold, which he is the bearer of, and which will, I hope, be agreeable and useful.* You have done so much with so little, that my wishes to increase your activity have every possible stimulus. I hope soon to hear that you have gathered fresh laurels, and that you may wear them as long and as happily as they have been speedily and worthily acquired, is the earnest wish of, &c. &c." The words in italics alone are quoted by Johnson, without reference either to the exertions of Mr. Morris through the different departments, or to his warm wishes in favour of general Greene; and thus distorted, the paragraph is sarcastically represented as "a strong demand upon the gratitude of him who received it." It is necessary to state, with respect to the cash advanced by Mr. Morris, and the smallness of the amounts, that he explicitly advised general Greene, that he

would endeavour, from time to time, to put him in possession of such sums of hard money as might be necessary for services which could not otherwise be performed ; but that even those supplies would, from necessity, be very moderate.

In the month of December, 1781, Mr. Morris communicated a plan to the respective governors of North and South Carolina and Georgia, for the relief of the southern army. The distresses which those states had lately experienced prevented the collection of their quotas in hard money, but they were able to furnish certain articles for the subsistence of the troops. The financier was extremely solicitous to procure the supplies by contract, but he had no specie for the purpose, nor were taxes imposed in the southern states for procuring it : he was therefore compelled to wait until the treasury should be replenished, the hard money in America become somewhat diffused, and a prospect presented of receiving back from those states in hard money their quota of the public taxes. He therefore devised and proposed a plan to appoint a receiver of taxes in each state, agreeably to the act of congress, and to empower such receiver to issue notes on the warrants of general Greene, payable in the taxes, or from the amount of them when collected. By this means, those articles necessary for the consumption of the army might have been purchased and the quota of the state been thereby paid. But the preliminary passage of a tax bill, which was required, was a fatal obstacle to the efforts of Mr. Morris. In a letter to general Greene, dated the nineteenth of December, 1781, relative to contracts, he observes that he “ would now offer contracts for your army, but the dubious state of the southern country, the want of men who have sufficient capital, and sufficient knowledge of their resources, even if I should offer, and, above all, my serious doubts whether any exertions would be made if once I stepped in to their relief ;—these are

reasons which oblige me to leave you for the present as you are." On January, 1782, he ordered the continental brig Active to Georgetown, South Carolina, and directed the balance in the hands of Mr. Hall, after the sale of the cargo, and reloading of the vessel, to be held subject to the order of general Greene. As to the remarks of Johnson, relative to partial payments to the army, in certain cases, the Congress was prohibited from making them by a resolution of Congress, passed on the fourteenth of December, 1781. On the twenty-fourth of April, 1782, Mr. Morris informs general Greene that the several bills which he found it necessary to draw had been practically honoured. "I am pleased," he continues, "at having been able by this means to strengthen your credit, and provide you with money, which I dare say, agreeable to your declarations, will be expended only on accounts of pressing necessity. Would it were in my power to make you perfectly easy on the score of money; you would then experience the alacrity with which my compliances would be made." A considerable portion of this letter is also quoted by Johnson, but the above paragraph, showing his acceptance of the bills, and his eagerness to relieve general Greene, is omitted.

In his letter of the tenth of June, 1782, Mr. Morris forcibly describes the situation to which he is reduced; a situation, struggling as he was in favour of his country against almost incredible difficulties, which entitles him to the warmest gratitude of the existing generation, and ought to have silenced the tongue of slander itself. "I can easily suppose that they (the army) are in want of money, because I well know that none has been sent for a long time past; but I did hope and expect that you would have had a sufficiency of clothing; and knowing, as I do, the expenditures which have been made for that purpose, I was both surprised and hurt to find your

distresses so great, when I had flattered myself that they had, in this respect, been totally relieved. Your situation in that exhausted country, and the impossibility of sending you any aid from hence, while our coasts are infested so much by the enemy, will naturally account for those distresses which have arisen from the want or badness of food. I cannot conceive that even money would afford you any considerable relief, were it in my power to send you any, which it is not. I have long since taken measures to obtain salt, but whether they will be effectual God only knows. With respect to pay I have laid down a rule which I am determined not to break through: it is, never to be guilty of partial payments, on any account whatever. You may, therefore, rely that your army shall, in this respect, fare equally with the rest of our officers and soldiers. If the states will furnish me with money, most cheerfully will I dispense it to all who are entitled to receive it: but until they do, I must continue to be as I am, exposed to clamour from every quarter. I have hopes, but I have so often been disappointed, that I dare not cherish those hopes myself, nor convey them to, nor encourage them in, you. It is with the greatest truth I assure you that I am driven to the greatest shifts to find the smallest sums for the commonest purposes. Rely on it, my dear sir, that I have hitherto, and shall continue to give you, all the support which my means will possibly admit of." On the eighteenth of June, 1782, in a communication to a committee of congress, detailing the causes which prevented the supply of the southern army on contract, and which general Greene had been authorized to effect, if practicable, in December, 1781, the financier remarks that he had already done every thing that his means would permit, to supply that army; and that, if he could command money, he would take care that they should be furnished with every thing necessary. It may be observed,

in exemplification of the expense and difficulty of procuring those supplies, that the cost of transporting flour alone was estimated at sixty pounds, Pennsylvania currency, per ton.—With respect to the bills drawn in 1783, by general Greene on Mr. Morris, the latter observes, in a letter of the sixteenth of May, “Before I close this letter, I must again repeat my solicitude on the score of your bills, which are coming in upon me so fast that the means of paying them must, I fear, be deficient;” and on the next day he advises him that it had been necessary to pay his draft for five hundred dollars out of his private fortune. The bills, however, at length so far exceeded the expectations of Mr. Morris, that he was unable to provide funds, and was consequently compelled, in August, 1783, to postpone their payment.

But it is unnecessary to expatiate further on this subject. The extracts which have, and a multitude of others which might have, been afforded, both in relation to the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Morris, and to the strict confidence which subsisted between him and general Greene, conclusively show, that no accusations of want of attention to the southern army, or of “uncandid and illiberal conduct” towards that officer, can be substantiated against the financier. But fortunately, we possess evidence of a more positive nature, which nothing can controvert. The venerable judge Peters, who was in the department of war, at the time of Mr. Hall’s appointment, makes the following remarks: “I never knew, nor heard, of any complaints on the subject, although we were in correspondence with general Greene, and the officers in the staff-departments of his separate command. Wants, difficulties, and complaints, too well founded, and generally remediless, were innumerable; but among them, any charge against Mr. Morris never came to our knowledge. I think this is a strong negative proof of the non-existence of any reasonable charge

against Mr. Morris, who had as many difficulties to encounter in pecuniary affairs as had the worthy general in his military command." Bishop White asked Mr. Morris, a few days before his death, the name of the secret agent who supplied general Greene with funds. He replied that it was Mr. Hall, a man of honour and integrity, whom he had employed for that purpose; and that when Greene came to Philadelphia to arrange his accounts, the whole affair was disclosed. The general was at first startled at the circumstance, and felt considerably hurt at having been deemed unworthy of confidence. Mr. Morris, with some observations on the reasons which caused him to adopt the measure, desired general Greene to consider the matter with attention: this advice was followed, and he then declared that Mr. Morris *had acted perfectly right*.

Having thus effectually refuted the points which more particularly affected the financial reputation of Mr. Morris, we have not space to dwell on the groundless charges relative to his partiality "in the distribution of his solid favours," nor on the allusions to "Morris's supposed redundant treasury;" "Morris's hoarded treasures," &c. &c., and we feel the less concern at our inability, because we know that every man of proper feeling will require no index to the causes from which these illiberal sarcasms have arisen. We cannot dismiss the subject, however, without making the following extract from general Greene's letter to Gouverneur Morris, declining the office of secretary at war, in 1783. "I have the highest opinion of Mr. Morris, minister of finance; and had I the least inclination to enter the department you propose, a connexion with him would be a strong motive. My acquaintance with him is small; I venerate his character; and the more so, for his engaging in so difficult an office under such unfavourable appearances." Nor can we omit the fine eulogium

of Mr. Morris, conveyed in his letter of the twentieth of January, 1783: "I most sincerely and heartily congratulate you on the full recovery of the southern states. Your conduct throughout the whole of your command has been such, that my applause can add no lustre to it; your enemies will be obliged to acknowledge the superiority which you have so often compelled them to feel, and your grateful country must feel more than she can acknowledge."

The campaign of 1781, which proved decisive of the long and doubtful contest, encircled the name of Robert Morris with living laurels which will for ever flourish. In the capture of Cornwallis, the energy, perseverance, and financial talents, of that great man, united with the wisdom and bravery of Washington, in deciding the fate of the union. The plan of the campaign of 1781, as agreed upon by the commander in chief and the French authorities, was to aim at the reduction of New York, the strong hold of the British; in this attack, the French army, under count Rochambeau, and the French fleets, under De Barras and De Grasse, were to co-operate. At that time, the American army lay at Philipsburg on York island, waiting for the fleet under De Grasse, then momentarily expected from the West Indies. The *southern enterprise* was never contemplated until unexpectedly, and to his extreme surprise, general Washington was compelled to change the whole plan of operations, because the French admiral, on his arrival, broke his engagements to come into the bay of New York, and announced his intention, through the admiral commanding the squadron at Rhode Island, to enter and remain, *for a few weeks*, in the Chesapeake. A claim to great merit has been made by, or on behalf of count Rochambeau, who commanded the French auxiliary troops, with regard to this change of measures, under the idea that he had planned the *southern enterprise*

against lord Cornwallis a long time before it occurred ; and it appears that a pamphlet to this effect was published in France. No fact can be more certain than that any claim for merit on these grounds was wholly gratuitous : the plan of the campaign had been most solemnly agreed to be the capture of New York by our main army, assisted by the French troops, commanded by the count, who had joined it at a convenient position for carrying into execution *that*, and *no other plan* : count De Grasse was destined to co-operate in this plan, (and *no other*,) and was, at a fixed period, to be in such a position before New York as to afford his indispensable assistance. There is no doubt that general Rochambeau had his share in devising this scheme ; and he is entitled to as much merit, in forming it, as any one may choose to bestow. A military character who had rendered such important services to our country as were, by universal consent, attributed to him, needed no borrowed plume ; nor is it our remotest wish to detract from the glorious participation of our allies in the capture of Cornwallis, but we do distinctly aver, from unquestionable authority, that all the arrangements connected with, and consequent on, the unexpected change were made wholly by general Washington. Count Rochambeau acknowledged that he advised De Grasse not to venture into New York bay : had he acted consistently with his duty, he ought with candour, and in due season, to have made this communication to the commander in chief ; whereas, the first intimation of a change of the original plan was contained in the French admiral's letter from Rhode Island. Assuredly, at this period, the expedition to the southward had never been thought of ; but as Rochambeau's countervailing advice had been attended with successful consequences, advantage was adroitly taken of this good fortune, and an otherwise unjustifiable interference was transformed into personal merit.

By a resolution of congress, of the thirty-first of July, 1781, Mr. Peters was directed, as a member of the board of war, to repair to head-quarters, with Mr. Morris, the superintendant of finance, in order to consult with the commander in chief on the subject of the arrangement and numbers of the army; the main object being to establish the mode, and quantity of supplies required for the operations of the campaign, which was known to them to be directed to the capture of New York. They fortunately arrived in camp a short time previous to the receipt of the French admiral's letter; and, therefore, a living witness in the person of the venerable judge Peters, who was present, and became acquainted with the real state of things when the change of measures took place, and whose mission to head-quarters demanded his perfect knowledge of every occurrence, can attest the fidelity of this narrative. Mr. Morris and Mr. Peters immediately proceeded to camp, and arrived at head-quarters in the early part of August, where they had repeated conferences with the commander in chief on the subject of their mission, to which only a few confidential officers were admitted. The proposed attack on New York was almost the exclusive subject of discussion; and the expectation of the arrival of the French fleet in the bay was a frequent theme of discourse. No doubt whatever existed as to the consummation of this event, on which the most perfect reliance was placed: but the apprehension expressed by count de Grasse, of danger to his heavy ships, should they enter the New York bay, and the avowal of his intention to sail for the Chesapeake, put at once an end to deliberation on the subject. This breach of a positive engagement produced an agitation in the high minded and honourable American chief, which those who witnessed it "can never forget." One morning, at the beating of the *reveille*, Mr. Morris and Mr. Peters

were aroused from their slumbers by a message from headquarters, requesting their immediate attendance. Somewhat surprised at the circumstance, they complied without delay, and found general Washington violently exclaiming against the breach of faith on the part of the French admiral, who had changed his destination, and informed him that he would proceed to Chesapeake bay, where he would co-operate in any plan formed for an enterprise in that quarter. After receiving this unwelcome communication, the commissioners returned to their tent, musing on the past scene, and lamenting the total subversion of the plan which they had been empowered to support. At the usual hour of breakfast, they returned to head quarters, and found the general as calmly engaged in making out his notes of the supplies he should require, as if nothing extraordinary had happened : from the powerful resources of his mind, he had already planned, in a sudden and masterly manner, the course of his future operations. His first question was, "Well, what can you do for me *under this unexpected disappointment?*" Mr. Peters replied, "Every thing with *money*, without it nothing," and looked anxiously towards the financier. "I understand you," said Mr. Morris, "but I must know the amount you require." Before the hour of dinner, Mr. Peters, having examined the returns of the commander in chief, communicated the result. Mr. Morris, with his usual candour, informed the general that he had not any means whatever of furnishing the amount in money, but would be compelled to rely *solely on his credit*; and that the commander in chief could decide whether he considered it prudent to depend upon that credit, the efficacy of which it would be necessary for him to risk. Washington instantly observed, "The measure is inevitable; and, therefore, resolved on; and I must pursue it at all hazards." The expedition against Cornwallis having thus been determined

on, Mr. Morris and Mr. Peters set out for Philadelphia, with an escort, through the shortest and most dangerous route. They were strictly enjoined by general Washington to keep the whole affair a profound secret; and so faithfully was this injunction observed, that the first intelligence received by congress of the movement of the army, was derived from the march of the troops through Philadelphia, on the third of September.

The necessary supplies of every thing required for this important and decisive enterprise were chiefly furnished by means of Mr. Morris's credit, to an immense amount, and Mr. Peters superintended their provision and preparation. From seventy to eighty battering cannon, and one hundred pieces of field artillery, were completely fitted and furnished, with attirail and ammunition, although, on the return of the committee to Philadelphia, there was not a field-carriage put together, and but a small quantity of fixed ammunition in the magazines: the train was progressively sent on in three or four weeks, to the great honour of the officers and men employed in that meritorious service. *All this, together with the expense of provision for, and pay of the troops, was accomplished on the personal credit of Robert Morris, who issued his notes to the amount of ONE MILLION FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS, which were finally all paid.* Assistance was afforded by Virginia and other states, from the merit of which we mean not to detract; but, as there was no money in the chest of the war office, and the treasury of the United States was empty, the expedition never could have been operative and brought to a successful issue, had not, most fortunately, Mr. Morris's credit, superior exertions, and management, supplied the indispensable sinews of war,—the funds necessary to give effect to exertion. These facts are ascertained from

Mr. Peters himself, within whose personal observation, or knowledge, they occurred.

In addition to the immense exertions of the financier to effect this movement, general Washington obtained a loan of specie from the count De Rochambeau. Mr. Morris managed this important negotiation, and made the proposition to the French minister, Luzern, who refused his assent in the most positive manner. But his persuasive talents, joined to the evident fact that the army would, without funds, be unable to move, and the opportune news of the arrival of De Grasse in the Chesapeake, finally prevailed.

This important change of measures evinces that accident more than design often produces the most momentous incidents, as well in the affairs of nations as of individuals; and we must look with greater admiration on the facility with which Washington so promptly accommodated his measures to this sudden change of circumstances, than if they had been taken on the most mature consideration. It was, in fact, a most fortunate change; for we have strong reasons to believe, that if the intended attempt on New York had been made, it would not have succeeded.

The situation in which Mr. Morris found himself placed at this period, would have appalled a less resolute and comprehensive mind. It was not official duty which prompted his determination to support, at every hazard, the views of general Washington, because, with an empty treasury, and a vast load of debt, nothing could be reasonably demanded from him in that character. He acted as a patriot who had devoted himself to his country, and resolved, as a private individual, to effect an object upon which the liberties of that country depended, and which baffled the resources of United America. In the prosecution of this gigantic labour, he surmounted every obstacle which impeded his progress with a celerity and perseverance,

as astonishing as they were successful. But his struggles were violent, and, at seasons, almost hopeless. "A very heavy demand," he says to general Schuyler, "was made upon me for the rapid movement : this demand was as urgent as it was great, and I was unable alike to resist or to answer it. By the greatest exertions, I have at length been able to comply with the general's views, but that compliance has exposed me, almost penniless, to answer engagements which cannot be violated." "I must struggle through these difficulties," he remarks, in a letter to Washington ; "but the doing so requires that attention and time which ought to be bestowed on greater objects." Even the supplies of cattle for the main army, when purchased, were arrested on the road from want of funds to procure pasturage ! The droves being placed in this situation in New Jersey, Mr. Morris thus addressed the governor of the state, relative to the means of moving them : "I know but two modes in which the object can be accomplished. The one is by the payment of money to the commissary for the purpose : but this, I fear, will not be in your power ; I therefore only mention it as preferable to all others, if practicable. The other mode is, by granting warrants to impress pasturage." On the twentieth of September, 1781, he makes the ensuing observations to the president of Pennsylvania, which serve to convey some idea of the invaluable services, and disinterested sacrifices of Robert Morris : "The late movements of the army have so entirely drained me of money, that I have been obliged to pledge my personal credit very deeply, in a variety of instances, besides borrowing money from my friends, and advancing, to promote the public service, *every shilling of my own.*" In a communication to the minister of France, soliciting further aid from the government, the financier justly remarks, that "the important operations now carrying on by his excellency gene-

al Washington depend so materially on the performance of my engagements, that the most fatal consequences may ensue from any breach of them." It may, indeed, truly be said, that the success of the American arms depended wholly on Robert Morris, not as an officer of the American States, but as a private American citizen. But notwithstanding the importance of the crisis and the urgency of his appeals, the states continued to pursue their shameful system of negligence and delay, until their tardy proceedings, at a moment when activity and energy were absolutely indispensable, aroused even the placid temper of Mr. Morris, schooled and regulated as it was amid the cares and disappointments of his office, and the murmurs and slanders of the public creditors. In the pithy sentences contained in the following letter to the commissary-general of purchases, dated the fourth of October, 1781, we readily recognise the state of his feelings at that period: "I am very glad that you push hard upon the states for supplies. It is, I find, necessary that you and I should understand each other on the subject. The general will, I dare say, take care to have as few unnecessary mouths as possible. But after all, a certain quantity of provisions is indispensably necessary. Now this quantity must be furnished by the states of Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. If you rely on my exertions, you will probably be disappointed. Should the operations against Cornwallis fail for want of supplies, the states must thank their own negligence. So inform them. If they will not exert themselves on the present occasion, they never will. As to all which can be said about the failure of the one, or of another, kind of money, it is left to themselves. Let them tax in money which will not fail. It is their business to provide supplies, and money too. If they neglect or omit this necessary duty, I again repeat that they must answer for the consequences. I shall be glad, at all

times, to hear from you very particularly, with all such information as you shall think necessary. But do not lean too hard upon me. Do not expect too much help from me. If you do so, you will be deceived and disappointed. Urge the states, therefore. Urge Delaware in particular. When I do furnish any thing, it must be money. Let some of your people, therefore, apply when you intend applications. I cannot run about the city to purchase articles. That is the duty of an assistant commissary ; and my time is too much, and I hope, too well employed to permit it."

It will be scarcely credited by the present generation, that at the very moment when Mr. Morris was almost overwhelmed by these great and manifold necessities, he was censured for not relieving the civil and military officers of Charleston, who, by the order of Lord Cornwallis, had been transported as prisoners to St. Augustine. But the indignation which ought to rise in the bosom of every honest American, on reading this record of ingratitude, never disturbed the equanimity of the sufferer, who thus calmly notices the reproach in a letter to general Greene : " The manner in which antipathies have been imbibed and propagated with respect to my department, is a little history of human weakness, and I might say wickedness. One sample will show the texture of the whole piece. While I was in advance, not only my credit, but every shilling of my own money, and all which I could obtain from my friends, to support the important expedition against Yorktown, much offence was taken that I did not minister relief to the officers taken prisoners at Charleston. I felt their distresses as sincerely as any man could do, but it was impossible to afford relief." But his resolution to devote all his resources to the attainment of that great object, which might, by one decisive blow, secure the independence of the country, was paramount to all secondary considerations.

*" Justum et tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instans tyranni,
Mente quatit solida."*

From the results which attended the official labours of Mr. Morris, it is fully established, that the objects of internal administration, though less brilliant and glorious, are the first source, and the firmest foundation, of warlike exploits. Having brought, by means of the bank of North America, the capitals and credit of the stockholders to the support of public credit, the financier resolved to produce the same effect in his own name, and with his private credit. He accordingly threw into circulation, no small sum of obligations signed by himself, and payable at different terms, out of foreign subsidies, or even out of the revenues of the United States; and these notes circulated as cash amongst the merchants and shopkeepers. Although, however, in the course of time, these obligations had amounted to upwards of five hundred and eighty-one thousand dollars, they never depreciated, except a little towards the end of the war; so great was the confidence of the public in the good faith and punctuality of the financier. Thus, at the very epoch in which the credit of the government was almost entirely annihilated, and its bills nearly without value, that of a single individual was stable and universal. It is impossible to overrate the advantages which resulted to the state from possessing, in these obligations of the financier, the means of anticipating the produce of taxes, at a time when such anticipations were not only necessary but indispensable. By this aid, it was enabled to provide for the wants of the army, no longer by way of requisition, but by regular contracts. This new mode had the most happy effects; it produced economy in purchases, exactness in supplies, and a cordial satisfaction among the people.

who had always manifested an extreme disgust at the compulsory requisitions. It ought not indeed to be asserted, that this anticipated employment of the produce of taxes, is an example to be imitated ; nor even can it be denied, on the contrary, that it has dangers. But Robert Morris possessed the faculty of using this resource with so much discretion, and of introducing so admirable an order and economy into all parts of the public expenditure, that no manner of inconvenience resulted from it. A foundation, however, was necessary to all these new dispositions of the treasurer ; and this foundation consisted in taxes. Congress, therefore, on the thirtieth of October, 1781, decreed that the states should be required to furnish the treasury by way of assessment, with the sum of eight millions of dollars, and at the same time determined what should be, in this sum, the contingent of each state.

But the remedy thus applied to the penury of the treasury proved inefficacious, slow, and uncertain. The compliances of the states with the requisitions of congress were generally tardy, and often shamefully deficient. Public credit was now at an end, and no means were afforded adequate to the public expense. Various expedients had been resorted to, and with considerable success, during the course of the year 1781 ; but it is of the nature of expedients to increase the evils which they postpone, and the autumn of that year found America in the situation of that part of the federal army which then returned through Philadelphia, from the capture of Yorktown, crowned with laurels, but distressed with debt. Hence the necessity of a full and regular supply of resources from the several states, upon which to found the operations of the financier. To obtain this, the personal presence of the commander in chief was called in to aid the civil authority, in stimulating them to exertion, and the cir-

cular letters of Washington and Morris urged every argument which the situation of America could suggest, to procure a faithful compliance with the votes of congress; but the states continued to pursue the same dilatory system which had already created so much vexation and embarrassment, and the several legislatures declared the inability of their constituents to pay taxes. Many were devising means to extract money from, instead of replenishing, the continental treasury; and some, although laws were passed for imposing taxes, directed the demands of the state to be previously satisfied, and the residue only to be paid into the general treasury.

This universal supineness, and want of activity, as well in the local constituted authorities as in the mass of the people, were the great obstacles which impeded the financial plans of Mr. Morris. As the credit of congress no longer existed, there was no other source from which the necessary funds could be obtained, or the immense engagements liquidated into which he had unavoidably entered. Hence the urgency with which he represented the necessity of complying, without delay, with the several requisitions made, from time to time, by the general congress. No means were spared to enforce the magnitude of the object; eulogiums and censures, entreaties, and even threats were resorted to, and for a long and dangerous period, without effect. During the whole course of his administration, the financier was incessantly employed in striving to arouse the fears, the energy, or the pride of the several state governments. At the same time, he was exceedingly distressed by the demands of the public creditors, who looked up to him as the only source from which they could obtain payment; but he uniformly and candidly declared to every claimant, that while he was determined to show no preferences whatever, they should

have justice to the full extent of the means placed in his power by the states, that he would never deceive them, and that while the wealth of the people continued in the hands of the several legislatures, redress could be expected from them, and from them only. "I hope," he remarked, "that a sense of justice and honour, with a patriotic regard for those rights which we have long laboured to establish, will prompt every state in the union to make those liberal efforts which are necessary to produce public confidence and public freedom."

The dilatoriness of the states was greatly increased, by a pernicious idea prevalent among many of them, that their accounts with the confederation were not to be adjusted. This sentiment necessarily spread a languor over all their operations; although to suppose, that an expensive war could be carried on without their joint and vigorous efforts, was beneath the wisdom of those who were called to the high offices of legislation. The moment that the opinion was admitted, that those states which did the least, and charged the most, would derive the greatest benefit, a shameless inactivity took the place of that noble emulation which ought to have pervaded and animated the whole union. Mr. Morris, feeling the importance of removing the dangerous sentiments thus raised by self interest, disaffection, or error, immediately declared to the several governors, that all the accounts of the states with the United States should be speedily liquidated, if he could possibly effect it, and that his efforts for that purpose should be unceasing. "I make this assurance," he said, in a letter dated the twenty-fifth of July, 1781, "in the most solemn manner, and I entreat that the consequences of a contrary assertion may be most seriously weighed and considered, before it is made or believed." "It is by being just to individuals," he remarks, in the same letter, "to each other, to

the union, to all ; by generous grants of solid revenue, and by adopting energetic methods to collect that revenue ; and not by complainings, vauntings, or recriminations, that these states must expect to establish their independence, and rise into power, consequence and grandeur."

In a circular letter addressed to the governors of the several states, dated the twenty-seventh of July, 1781, Mr. Morris makes the following excellent remarks : " Despotic governments are, in war, superior to others, by the union of efforts, the secrecy of operations, and the rapidity with which every wheel may be moved by one sovereign will. This superiority, however, is amply compensated to free governments by the ardent attachment of their citizens, and the general confidence which enables them to make exertions beyond their force, and expend in one year the revenues of many. A single view of our enemy, in the unequal contest she now carries on, will demonstrate these advantages more clearly than any arguments. The credit of Great Britain is not only her chief, but it is almost her only, support. Inferior in every thing else to the associates combined against her, she still makes head every where, and balances the opposition through the four quarters of the globe. While we feel the force of these last strugglings of her ambition, we must admire the source from whence they flow. Admiring, we should endeavour to imitate, and in order to succeed, we need only make the attempt. There was a time when public confidence was higher in America than in any other country. Hence the existence of that paper, which bore us through the conflict of five years hostility. In the moment when none others dared to oppose Great Britain in her career towards universal empire, we met her ambition with our fortitude, encountered her tyranny with our virtue, and opposed her credit with our own. We may perceive what our credit would have done, had it been

supported by revenue, from what it has already effected without that support: and we have no reason to doubt but that it may be restored, when we reflect on the fate which paper currencies have formerly sustained."

To augment the difficulties experienced by the financier, the several states had persuaded themselves into the belief that their exertions were unequal, and each maintained the superiority of its own efforts. Each one claimed the merit of having done more than others, and each continued desirous of relaxing to an equality with the supposed deficiencies of its neighbours. Hence it followed, that they daily became more and more negligent, and a dangerous supineness pervaded the whole continent. Recommendations which, in the year 1775, would have roused all America to action, were suffered, in 1781, to lie neglected. Such was the inevitable consequence of this opinion: the settlement of former accounts being considered as a thing forgotten, men naturally reasoned from them to those which were then present,—concluded that they would also drop into forgetfulness, and considered every thing not furnished as so much saved. The legislatures would not call forth the resources of their respective constituents; the public operations languished; the necessity of purchasing on credit enhanced the expense; the want of that credit compelled the use of force; the use of that force created offence; and the country was daily plunged more deeply in debt, and its revenue was more deeply anticipated. In reference to this subject, Mr. Morris remarks, that "a situation so dangerous calls for more accurate principles of administration, and these cannot be too speedily adopted. The settlement of accounts is the first step; but it is necessary not only that this settlement be speedy, but also that it be final; for if it be not final, the disputes on that subject will have the same baleful influence with those now subsisting.

Disunion among the states must follow in the event. Disgust must take place in the moment. The same opprobrious indolence will continue; and, in the mean time, it is to little purpose that our country abounds in men and subsistence, if they cannot be called forth for her defence." The conduct of the states appears the more extraordinary, as the whole amount of requisitions, from the beginning of the war to the first of March, 1780, was but little more than five millions of dollars; and yet this demand, moderate as it appears, was not complied with.

In this disastrous situation of public affairs, Mr. Morris strongly recommended to congress the imposition, in addition to the five per cent. already called for on articles imported, and on prizes and prize goods, of a land tax, a poll tax, and an excise on spirituous liquors, to be appropriated to the payment of the public debts. He admitted that neither of those taxes would be strictly equal between the states, but maintained that no other tax would be so, and that, taken together, they would be as nearly equal as the fluctuating nature of human affairs would permit. He proposed that the land tax should be laid at a certain rate by the acre, because the superior certainty of such a tax would give it the preference to others, although it could not probably be so great as might have been expected. In fact, his efforts to obtain supplies upon the various requisitions made by congress, to operate a settlement of past accounts, and to procure proper funds for the public debts, were unceasing. By an act of the twenty-eighth of June, 1781, he was directed to press a compliance with those requisitions, and on the sixth of July he wrote a circular letter to the several state-governors, in a strain of dignity and remonstrance, and excited patriotism which has seldom been excelled.

The demands of congress were two-fold : some for specific supplies of the produce of the several states ; the others for money. Previously to the appointment of Mr. Morris, the manner of doing public business had been such, that it was not merely difficult, but absolutely impracticable, to state any accounts in the clear and satisfactory manner which ought always to be desired in private life, but which, in public life, is of the last importance. This evil, however, resulted more from the want of arrangement, than the fault of any particular men ; but the perplexities and labours in which it involved the financier were not the less great and vexatious. Moreover, the worst effects arose from demanding generally a contribution of specified articles ; and Mr. Morris soon found, by experience, that they were not to be relied on. In demanding these supplies from the states, he requested information as to the revenue laws which had been passed, the mode of collecting taxes, the monies in their treasuries, the various appropriations of it, and the different paper currencies in the several states, for the purpose of obtaining proper materials on which to found his future expectations, and to form efficacious systems of revenue and expenditure. But Mr. Morris experienced the mortification of not receiving any accurate or satisfactory answers to these questions ; a strong proof of the relaxed habit of administration in this country at that period.

The low state of public credit, from the want of solid funds to support it, had induced the United States in congress, to call for an impost of five per cent. on all goods imported, and on all prizes and prize goods, to be granted for the payment of the principal and interest of the debts contracted, or which might be contracted during the war. Some of the states complied with this demand. The two most southern

states were in such disorder, that a compliance from them could not be reasonably expected, nor was it relied on; but Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Delaware, Maryland, and North Carolina, delayed passing the necessary laws. On the seventh of July, 1781, an energetic appeal from the financier procured the compliance of the states of New York, Delaware, and North Carolina, and the accession of the others was confidently anticipated: this was of the last importance, as the impost could not be carried into effect without the concurrence of every state in the union. Thus, instead of realizing funds from this source, the financier was compelled patiently to await the event. In the month of July, 1781, notwithstanding the pressing instances of Mr. Morris, very little hard money had been obtained from the states on the past requisitions of congress, and not more than one hundred thousand dollars during his whole administration. Some considerable specific supplies had, indeed, been drawn forth, and a large amount of paper money remained in his hands: from the former, the army had been principally maintained; but the paper money was of no possible use, although, from motives of policy, it was necessary to receive it in payment of taxes. The confidence of the people was so entirely lost, that no bills of credit whatever could at that moment have been made use of as money. "If I could buy any thing with it," Mr. Morris remarks, "I would not, until the last necessity; but it will buy nothing, so that it must be burnt as soon as it honestly can." In communicating this lamentable state of public affairs to Dr. Franklin, Mr. Morris makes the following observations: "The picture I have already given of this country will not be pleasing to you. Truth bids me add, that it will admit of a higher colouring. But what else could be expected from us? A revolution—a war. The dissolution of government—the creating of it

anew. Cruelty, rapine, and devastation in the midst of our very bowels. These, sir, are circumstances by no means favourable to finance. The wonder then is, that we have done so much, that we have borne so much, and the candid will add, that we have dared so much."

In the beginning of the year 1782, Mr. Morris appears to have felt more severely than at any other period, the weight of the burden which rested upon him, and beneath which he,

for a moment, tottered. The states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Maryland, had not yet passed laws for the impost of five per cent.; and Virginia had lately suspended the operation of the act which they had enacted in relation to it. The public debt being unfunded and unprovided for, the interest could not be paid, and those who confided in the government in the hour of distress, were defrauded. To expect that, under such circumstances, others would confide in that government would have been folly; and to expect that foreigners would trust a government which had no credit with its own citizens, would have been madness. The whole weight, therefore, of the war, was necessarily borne in the present moment; and even the slightest anticipations of revenue were made on the personal credit of the financier. "I have laboured," Mr. Morris eloquently remarked, "to establish a credit for my country, that when the period should arrive, (and I hoped it was not far distant,) in which I would lay down the burthen now pressing upon me, my successor in office should have no other difficulties to struggle with, than those which necessarily attend an extensive and complicated administration. It is, therefore, with no common degree of anxiety and distress, that I see my wishes frustrated. I feel as an American for my country; as a public servant, for the interest and honour of those whom I serve, and as a man, that I cannot enjoy the ease and tranquillity I have sought

for, through a life of continual care and unremitted labour. It is my duty to mention to you (congress) the fact, and to apprise you that, in such circumstances, our operations will continue to be the desultory efforts of individual power, rather than the combined exertion of political strength and firmness."

At this juncture, too, the repeated assurances received almost daily from the French government, of its steady determination to grant no further pecuniary aid, left no room to doubt the firmness of its determination. This was, indeed, a severe disappointment to Mr. Morris, who had formed not only hopes, but even expectations from that quarter. He believed that, when the brilliant successes of the last campaign should be known, and when it should also be known how much the United States were able to perform, and how necessary an aid of money was to call their power into action, the king of France would again have extended that relief which would be most beneficial to the common cause. Hopes of pecuniary aid from any other quarter were utterly delusive. It was in vain that expensive establishments were kept up to solicit succour from Spain, which appeared neither able nor willing to afford it; from Holland, which, as she was seeking a peace, could not wish to increase the causes of war; or from Russia, which seemed more inclined to crush than to support our cause. "Let us apply to borrow," said the financier, "wherever we may, our mouths will always be stopped by the one word—*security*. The states will not give revenue for the purpose, and the United States have nothing to give but a general national promise, of which their enemies loudly charge them with the violation."

Goaded by the clamours of the public creditors, and uniformly disappointed by the inattention of the state authorities to his most pressing entreaties, Mr. Morris at length assumed a style in his communications, at once monitory, dignified,

and solemn. On the first of September, 1781, he thus endeavours to awaken the fears of the governor of Delaware : "I have pressed upon you as urgently as I could, the necessity of a compliance with the requisitions : the moment is now arrived when that compliance must be insisted on. If the legislature have neglected to pass the proper laws, or if there has been any neglect in the execution of those they have passed, the persons who are in fault must be responsible for the consequences to their suffering fellow citizens. It is needless to say, that a body of soldiers will not starve in the midst of a plentiful country. I hope most ardently that your timely endeavours will have spared the necessity of military collection. If not, I still hope that the military force will be exerted with all possible mildness : but at any rate, the public service must not suffer." To the governor of Massachusetts, he uses the following energetic language : "To reiterate arguments on the subject will be unnecessary. It is a plain matter, parallel to the observation of every man, and must be determined on the simple question, shall the faith of the United States be supported ? You, sir, who know the value of credit and the duty of supporting it ; you, who feel the force of those moral obligations on which that duty is founded ; you, I hope, will enforce my applications, or rather the applications of our sovereign, by that energy which accompanies the voice of the supreme executive, when standing on the ground of information, and speaking the language of reason and truth." In concluding a circular letter to the governors of the several states, dated the nineteenth of October, 1781, he makes the following feeling and eloquent remarks : "By the bounty of the Almighty, we are placed in a situation where our future fate depends upon our present conduct. We may be happy or miserable, as we please. If we do our duty now, this war will soon be brought to a close. If not, it may

last for many years, and what will then be its termination, it is not in human wisdom to foresee. Thoroughly convinced that the enemy must ask peace, when we are in a condition vigorously to prosecute the war, and that we shall be in that condition whenever our affairs are reduced to order, and our credit restored, and that for these purposes, nothing more is necessary than a proper system of taxation. I cannot avoid expressing my sentiments on the subject, in all the warmth with which they flow from my heart: I hope and pray that the facts I have stated may meet the calm attention which is due to their importance, and that such measures may be taken as shall redound to the honour and interest of our country." To the governor of Rhode Island, he observes, twenty-ninth of December, 1781: "the time is hastening on when it must be determined, perhaps for ever, whether the United States of North America shall, or shall not, possess the inestimable jewel of public credit. In the mean time, the conduct of those, in public life, as far as it relates to this object, must determine whether or not they are really the friends of their country. I hope, sir, you will pardon me for adding, that if every state in the union has an equal right with yours to wait until others have complied, the congress may spare themselves the trouble of doing any further business, and their constituents may be spared the expense of keeping them together."

Eleven months having elapsed after the recommendation of congress, imposing the impost of five per cent., and the states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Delaware not having complied with it, Mr. Morris, on the third of January, 1782, addressed a circular letter to those states, couched in a style of firm and dignified reproof, which ought to have proved irresistible: "Congress," he says, "have done their duty in requesting revenue, and I have done mine in soliciting a compliance with their request. It only remains for me to bear

testimony against those who oppose that compliance; and to declare that they, and they only, must be responsible for the consequences. They are answerable to the other states, to their fellow citizens, to the public creditors, and to the whole world. I must speak plainly on this subject: I must point, out, from time to time, the reason of those things which have produced murmurs and complaints against the representative body of America. I must direct those who suffer, to those who occasion their sufferings; and those who are injured, to those who have done them wrong. Let me repeat, that the hope of our enemy is in the derangement of our finances; and let me add, that when revenue is given, that hope must cease. He, therefore, who opposes the grant of such revenue, not only opposes himself to the dictates of justice, but he labours to continue the war, and of consequence, to shed more blood, to produce more devastation, and to extend and prolong the miseries of mankind." In a communication to congress, on the eleventh of February, 1782, relative to the non-compliance of the states with their recommendations, he strongly portrays the necessity of urging obedience to their requisitions: "It is, at least," he remarks, "my duty to suggest it; a duty which I owe to America at large, and which no hope of praise, or apprehension of blame, shall induce me to neglect. I know there is a delicacy which influences some minds, to treat the states with tenderness, and even adulation, while they are in the habitual inattention to the calls of national interest and honour. I know that delicacy, and I disclaim it. Nor will I be deterred from awaking those who slumber on the brink of ruin. But my voice, sir, is feeble; and I must pray to be assisted by the voice of the United States in congress. Supported by them, I may, perhaps, do something; but without that support, I must be a useless incumbrance. If we look back to the conduct of the

several states in former times, we shall find that the negligence with which they have treated the requests of congress, has been unequalled, unless by the earnestness of entreaty with which the requests were made. And I fear there is little hope that the conduct now to be pursued, will, in one instance, become the counterpart of former experiences. We have reason to apprehend a continuance of that shameful negligence which has marked us to a proverb, while all Europe gazed in astonishment at the unparalleled boldness and vastness of claims, blended with an unparalleled indolence and imbecility of conduct. But let the several states be ever so negligent, the confederation has given no power to compel. While it confers on congress the privilege of asking every thing, it has secured to each state the prerogative of granting nothing." In a letter to the speaker of the house of assembly of Pennsylvania, dated the thirteenth of February, 1782, he gratefully acknowledges their zeal in the glorious cause, and their full and ready compliance with the requisitions of congress: "It would give me more pleasure," he feelingly remarks, "than I can express, had this example been imitated by all. Had this been the case, new recommendations would long since have been made for other revenues, sufficient to fund all the public debts, and before the present moment, you, sir, might have had the inexpressible satisfaction of signing those laws which would have dried up the tears of many fatherless children, and removed from a thousand worthy bosoms, the heavy load of affliction."

But it is impracticable to continue our extracts on this topic: during the whole course of his administration, Mr. Morris was incessantly, vigorously, and in a great degree, unsuccessfully employed in persevering efforts to arouse the states from their lethargy, to stimulate them to a noble emulation, and to awaken them to a sense of the dangers with

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which their systematic indolence surrounded the common cause. But we cannot refrain from extracting a portion of his eloquent appeal made on the ninth of July, 1782, to the state of Virginia: "What, in the name of heaven, can be expected by the people of America, but absolute ruin, if they are so inattentive to the public service? Not until December will Virginia give any thing, you say, towards the service of the current year. How, then, are we to carry on those operations which are necessary? How is our country to be defended? How is our army to be supported? Is this what is meant by the solemn declaration to support with life and fortune the independence of the United States?"

Such were the immense difficulties which embarrassed the operations of the financier, and against which he triumphantly struggled. In addition to the unjustifiable lukewarmness and torpor of the states, the little money which he could command was required in a thousand different ways. The private and ~~just~~ claims of individuals which he was incessantly called upon to satisfy, not unfrequently drove him almost to the verge of despair. He was fully sensible of the distresses which they endured from being in advance for the public service, but it was not in his power properly to defray the necessary expenses of the war, much less to pay off past debts. "As to making advances," he said, "from my own private fortune, I have, before my acceptance of the office I now hold, expended much more in that way than ought to have fallen to any private citizen." His reply to these numerous applications was generally uniform and conclusive: he lamented the necessity of refusal, set forth the plain fact that until the several legislatures levied taxes for the payment of past debts, it was impossible for him to discharge them; and declared that the only thing in his power was, to place the debts on ~~the~~ the punctual payment of which he was endeavour-

ing to secure : hence, he said, if his exertions were crowned with success, the public creditors would find themselves speedily relieved, as the funded debt of the country would be sought after by monied men, whenever they found that permanent revenues were established to secure the principal and interest. But arguments of this nature were little calculated to satisfy claimants, the justice of whose demands was indisputable ; and who, by reason of the governmental defalcation, were involved in embarrassments and distress. The payment of the principal of their claims was wholly impossible ; and the security of it, together with the payment of the interest, entirely depended on the revenue arising from the impost law, which could not then be carried into effect, from the non-compliance of Rhode Island and Georgia to the relative recommendations of congress. The states of Massachusetts and Delaware had acceded to this measure, and Georgia had been so recently delivered from invasion, that the neglect there could only be imputed to the distracted state of the country. The obstinate refusal, and objections of Rhode Island, however, continued in full force, and at length induced congress, for the purpose of avoiding, if possible, the pernicious consequences which might be induced from the existence of disagreeable discussions between the union and an individual state, to adopt, on the tenth of October, 1782, a resolution, “that congress call upon the states of Rhode Island and Georgia for an immediate definitive answer, whether they will comply with the recommendation of congress to vest them with power to levy a duty of five per centum on all goods imported, and on prize and prize goods.” Mr. Morris, in conveying this act to the governors of the respective states mentioned, observed : “I would wish to say nothing on this subject, but I feel myself irresistibly impelled to observe, that the public creditors are numerous, merito-

rious, and important. It is a body composed of the most zealous whigs in America : it contains those who have supplied, and those who have composed our armies under the most trying circumstances. The revenues asked for, are to repay the monies advanced for our freedom, and the blood which has been shed in our cause ; and, if it were necessary that pity should come in aid of gratitude and justice, I might observe that the widows and orphans of those who have spent their all, and lost their lives, in defence of America, are reduced to the extremest want, by withholding their just due." On the twenty-fourth of October, he again urges the governor of Rhode Island, in the most firm and solemn manner, to comply with the requisition : "The evil," he says, "presses hard. Public credit is at the last gasp, or rather it has expired. Not only are we to expect a formidable clamour from the abused and injured creditors, but there is really very little hope of obtaining foreign loans. For how can it be expected, that a republic without funds should persuade foreigners to lend their money, while its own citizens, who have already lent theirs, can neither obtain the interest nor any solid security either for interest or principal. This, sir, is an object of great magnitude, and one which, directly or indirectly, concerns every inhabitant of the United States. The critical situation we stand in, has rendered it necessary for congress to demand a decided answer. No time is to be lost ; for if the revenues cannot be obtained, the public creditors must be told so in plain terms. The efforts to borrow farther funds must cease of course, and then the whole weight of the war must fall on the people in one mode or the other. It is a very serious question, whether the little applause which individuals may gain by specious declamations and publications should overbalance every consideration of national safety. This serious and important question, your legislature is now, by the

representative of all America, solemnly called on to decide."

Still the clamours of the creditors continued to be directed to Mr. Morris, frequently accompanied with calumnies, invective, and even absolute insults, as shameful as they were unmerited. In vain did he urge his total inability, and acknowledge, however uselessly, his firm conviction that justice required a payment of debts, and a performance of promises, and that congress were bound to do what they had not the means of doing. In vain did he deplore, most feelingly, the sufferings of those who had intrusted their property to the public. "I repeat again, sir," he exclaims in one of his letters on the subject, "that I most sincerely sympathise with such of my fellow citizens as are creditors to the public ; but I do not vaunt that sympathy in the channel of pitying complaints, nor take the merit of compassion, by a temporary procrastination which must increase their distresses. But I demonstrate my feelings to all the world, by calling on those to afford relief who alone can afford it ; and I here declare, that those who oppose the granting of revenue to congress for the liquidation of our public debts, must be alone answerable for the consequences ; for they alone are the cause of all the tears that are shed, all the complaints that are uttered, and all the miseries that are endured." In fact, the greatest part of his time was consumed in hearing and answering the most torturing solicitations from individuals in all parts of the continent, whose claims were founded in justice, but precluded from necessity. From these combined causes, the situation of his department, in the summer of 1782, was really deplorable. "I with difficulty am enabled," he remarks, in a letter to general Washington, "to perform my engagements, and am absolutely precluded from forming new ones. I have, therefore,

been under the very disagreeable necessity of suffering the public service to stand still in more lines than one. I have been driven to the greatest shifts, and am at this moment unable to provide for the civil list." On the twenty-ninth of August, he addressed the commander in chief in a solemn, a sorrowful, and almost a desponding manner: he declared, that being resolved to act justly, and finding that he should be unable to pay the contractors, he would give them due notice, that they might retire in season: he advised him that, that mournful period was fast approaching, and without infinitely greater exertions on the part of the states, that it would soon arrive. "To comprise this matter," he continued, "in a short compass; your army is fed at a dollar for nine rations, or three dollars and a third per month to feed a soldier. Twenty-four thousand rations per day would therefore amount to eighty thousand dollars monthly, which is more than had been paid by all the states on the first instant. The object of this letter, sir, is to request that your excellency will consider how your army is to be subsisted, or kept together, if I am obliged to dissolve the contracts. I pray that heaven may direct your mind to some mode by which we may yet be saved. I have done all that I could, and given repeated warnings of the consequences, but it is like preaching to the dead. Every exertion I am capable of shall be continued whilst there is the least glimmering of hope."

Notwithstanding the pressure from all quarters, this glimmering hope induced the financier to bear up still longer against the rent of demands which was rushing in upon him. Till long before, have overwhelmed him, supported only by the revenues and supplies of the states. At length, his other resources, became useless by the total stagna-

tion of trade, owing to the expectations of peace. In spite of all his efforts he became in arrears; "but," he remarks to Washington, on the ninth of September, 1782, "I am determined to continue my efforts to the last moment, although at present I really know not which way to turn myself." At length, weak and tottering as he was, the threatened storm burst over him; but his great mind repelled its fury, and triumphed over difficulties which might have driven the firmest to despair. At the close of September, the contractors declared explicitly, that they could no longer be responsible for supplying the troops, on the terms agreed on in their contracts. They demanded from the financier, assurances of indemnification at the close of the contract, for all damages sustained from the public inability to perform their engagements; and concluded with the cautionary declaration, that if they did not receive such assurances before the first of October, they would surrender their contracts. Mr. Morris, properly and decisively, refused to comply with these demands, because, from the moment those assurances were made, there would be no longer any restraint on the contractors. Negligence or profusion might have extended the damages to any amount, and his promise would have bound the public to abide by the pernicious consequences. The financier, consequently, from his comprehensive and wonderful resources, endeavoured to make immediate arrangements to meet the threatened danger; but such was the paucity of the returns from the states, that he was compelled to advise the proper authorities, that unless means could be devised to feed the army at a long credit, he must, himself, command the contractors to desist, and desire the commander in chief to subsist his troops by military collection. "I know well," he observed, "that the service must suffer; but I also know that an early suf-

spring is better than a late rain; and I find myself reduced to the necessity of choosing between these two evils by the negligence of the states. Whatever be the consequences, it must be theirs to answer it; and I hope the people will at length distinguish between those who admonish them to their good, and those who flatter them to their destruction." The appearances of peace at this moment greatly augmented these evils; and the general cautions on that subject from Europe, together with the most pointed remonstrances from the public officers, could not prevent the lethargy which the very name of peace extended through all the states. At this crisis, Mr. Morris strongly recommended to the public ministers in Europe to take the most suitable measures to prevent the people from falling into the snare which the enemy had laid. "Undue security in opinion," he remarked, "is generally very hurtful in effect, and I dread the consequences of it here, if the war is to be carried on, which is not improbable."

On the first of October, 1782, congress again required the several states to make speedy payment of their respective quotas into the public treasury, that they might be enabled thereby to pay the officers and soldiers of the army. In urging a compliance with this renewed requisition, Mr. Morris, incited by the sufferings of the troops, and indignant at the embarrassing and laborious situation in which he was himself placed, as the organ of the government, argued with unusual severity: "It is a mighty fashionable thing," he said, "to declaim on the virtue and sufferings of the army, and it is a very common thing for those very declaimers to evade, by one artifice or another, the payment of those taxes which alone can remove every source of complaint. Now, sir, it is a matter of perfect indifference by what subterfuge this evasion is effected, whether by voting against taxes, or,

what is more usual, agreeing to them, in the first instance, but taking care, in the second, to provide no competent means to compel a collection ; which cunning device leaves the army at last, as a kind of pensionary upon the voluntary contributions of good whigs, and suffers those of a different complexion to skulk and screen themselves entirely from the weight and inconvenience." Truly, indeed, did Mr. Morris observe, " my credit has already been on the brink of ruin ; if that goes, all is gone." To illustrate this fact, it is only necessary to state, that in October, 1782, he was obliged to sell a portion of clothing, arrived for the use of the army, for the purpose of paying debts for needle work, done by people in extreme indigence, amounting to twelve thousand dollars.

The embarrassments in the department of finance now continued daily to increase. Mr. Morris was well aware of what is known to every body, that although contrivances may be used to procrastinate a payment, it must at length come from some quarter or other : he was, however, driven to, and exhausted, all the expedients he could devise, but at last he found himself in arrears. Impelled by the dangerous condition of the treasury, he applied to congress, on the twenty-first of October, 1782, for directions and relief ; and on the same day, appealed to the governors of the several states in a style so noble, so dignified, and so forcible, that it would seem, at this day, to have been sufficient to sweep away the petty feelings of local advantages which impeded the progress of the war, embarrassed the operations of the financier, and devoted the heroic army to want and starvation. " There are certain arguments, sir," he observed, " which ought not to be used, if it is possible to avoid them, but which every one invested with public authority should suggest to his own mind for the government of his own conduct. How long is

a nation that will do nothing for itself, to rely on the aid of others? In a war waged by one country to obtain revenue from another, what is to be expected in case of conquest? How long will one part of a community bear the burdens of the whole? How long will an army undergo want in the midst of plenty? How long will they endure misery without complaint, injustice without reproach, and wrongs without redress? These are questions which cannot be solved by arithmetical calculation. The moral causes which may procrastinate, or precipitate events, are hidden from mortal view. But it is within the bounds of human knowledge to determine, that all earthly things have some limits which it is imprudent to exceed, others which it is dangerous to exceed, and some which can never be exceeded. It is possible that we are near the close of this war, and, perhaps, we are only in the middle of it. But if the war should continue, we have to blame ourselves; for, were those resources called into action which we really possess, the foreign enemies would soon lose all hope, and abandon their enterprise. The greater injury, therefore, which we sustain, is not from foreign, but from domestic enemies; from those who impede the necessary exertions. I have mentioned one among many instances, to show the consequence of withholding the public revenue; and I take the liberty to observe, that it would be more manly to declare at once for unlimited submission to British tyranny, than to make specious declarations against it, and yet take the direct road to bring it about, by opposing the measures necessary for our defence. That open declaration will doubtless be restrained by the fear of general resentment, but the other conduct is so much the more dangerous, as it is calculated to close people's eyes, while they approach the precipice, that they may be thrown down with the greater ease, and more absolute certainty."

But a detail of the measures which Mr. Morris pursued to stimulate the exertions of the states, would not only exceed our limits, but comprise a tedious history of ineffectual, but reiterated complaints, entreaties, menaces and remonstrances. "Whatever expedient," he remarked to Dr. Franklin, "could suggest itself, which might have that desirable effect, I have tried; and I do assure you, that when I look back at the scenes through which I have passed, they strike my own mind with astonishment." The situation of the financier, at this moment, was truly distressing. Compelled to direct the finances of a country almost without revenue, and involved in an expensive war; surrounded by creditors whose distresses, while they increased their clamours, rendered it more difficult to appease them; an army ready to disband or mutiny; a government whose sole authority consisted in the power of framing recommendations; surely it is not necessary to add any colouring to such a piece; and yet, truth would justify more than fancy could paint. The settlement of accounts, long and intricate beyond comprehension, became next to impossible, from the want of that authority which was on the verge of annihilation, owing to those confusions which nothing could dissipate, except the complete liquidation of accounts, and an honest provision for payment. During the whole course of his administration, his time was dissipated, his mind perplexed, and his temper assailed, by the persistence, the clamours, and the insults, of private claimants. Nor, notwithstanding his peculiar urbanity and mildness of disposition, it was not in human nature to endure unruffled, a continued series of impatient, persecuting, and pressing demands, not unfrequently mingled with petulance, and sometimes, even with personal insult. "If," he remarks in one of these momentary excitements, but with justice, "the public creditors and their fellow citizens, instead of

uttering complaints on every occasion, would exert themselves in paying their own, and influencing their neighbours to pay their taxes for the continental service, I should soon hope to see our affairs on such a footing as to silence all complaints : but whilst people are grasping at every farthing the public possess, and no measures are taken to replenish the fountain from whence payments spring, what can they expect ?”

In one instance the secretary of Mr. Morris was personally assaulted by an irritable French captain ; and he always returned unopened, communications from those who had made use of unbecoming or unjustifiable language. Four French officers, towards the conclusion of the war, finding that entreaties could not draw money from an empty treasury, determined to embrace a more vigorous course by resorting to threats : they accordingly assumed a lofty attitude, and addressed a letter to the financier, *demanding* the payment which they had previously solicited. But they were little acquainted with the character of Mr. Morris, who made the following laconic reply, dated the twenty-third of January, 1784 ;

“GENTLEMEN—I have received this morning your application. I make the earliest answer to it. You *demand instant payment*. I have *no money to pay you with*.”

But whenever these applications were couched in proper terms, he uniformly sympathised with the sufferers, and lamented the necessity which forbade him to satisfy their just claims.

During these gigantic exertions in vanquishing obstacles, which threatened momentarily to overpower him, and which would have baffled the united energies of congress if unsupported by the financier, it will hardly be credited by posterity, that Mr. Morris was continually the victim of base and unfeeling slander. It is probable that, as these vile calumnies

related to himself personally, he would never have condescended to notice them, but believing that the design was not so much to injure him, as to involve the national affairs committed to his charge, he frequently adverted to, and refuted them in his official correspondence. In the beginning of the year 1782, the principal charges, by the propagation of which the financier was rewarded for saving his country from ruin, had resolved themselves into the following points : 1. That he had robbed the eastern states of their specie. 2. That he was partial to Pennsylvania, being commercially connected with half the merchants of Philadelphia. 3. That he was partial to the disaffected. 4. That he had established a bank for sinister purposes. 5. That his plan, and the plan of Pennsylvania, was to keep the state of Virginia poor. 6. That, with the secretary of congress, and a Mr. Coffin, he was engaged in speculation. Now, with regard to the first point, the eastern states themselves entertained a totally different opinion, although there were a few persons in different parts of those states, who, from their extreme latitude of conscience, did not scruple to assert what they knew to be false, and to invent falsehoods with the design to injure the public service, and sow dissensions among the states. In fact, Mr. Morris had not received, either from the eastern or the southern states, one shilling of specie from the time of his appointment to the office of financier, although he had sent very considerable sums both eastward and southward, as the exigencies of the service required.

As to the second point, that he was commercially connected with half the merchants of Philadelphia, had it been as true as it was false, the conclusion that he was partial to Pennsylvania would by no means follow. A merchant, as such, can be attached particularly to no country : his mere place of residence, as a merchant, is perfectly accidental ; and it would

be just as reasonable to conclude, that an American residing at Batavia and trading to China must be partial to the Batavians and Chinese. The story of his partiality towards Pennsylvania, however, was very assiduously circulated, and obtained an extensive currency. It was supposed that he must necessarily be partial to that state, because he resided in it: the assertion, therefore, was made, and the contracts he had entered into were brought as the evidence to support it. Mr. Morris had received from Pennsylvania, for the service of the year 1781, one hundred and eighty thousand dollars, besides a warrant, then unpaid, on their treasury, for nearly ninety thousand more; and the contracts for the state had not amounted to that sum. No other state in the union had advanced a single shilling for the expenditures of that year. Now, while he was ungratefully charged with this partiality, the financier had actually exhausted his credit, and supplied every shilling of money which he could command from his private fortune, to support and succour the southern states. This did not arise from any partiality in their favour. For such a man would neither endeavour to ingratiate himself with them on such principles, nor subject himself to the ignominy of just reproach from others. He did it for the general good.

His partiality to the disaffected was among the circumstances upon which the aspersions, which had been so generally applied, that they had lost their effect. It was, moreover, connected in those days, that this particular aspersion was generally cast on those who least deserved it, and by those who were in a bad way of becoming disaffected themselves. Such a charge against an honest and untiring labourer in the commonwealth implied that he possessed inveterate enemies who had invented the charge against him, and were, therefore, compelled to resort to the regions of fiction for the ground of calumny.

One of the most brilliant acts of Mr. Morris's administration was the establishment of the bank of North America. That bank had already saved the country from the efforts of her avowed, and the intrigues of her concealed enemies ; and it saved her from those who, while they clamoured loudly against the administration for doing so little, sedulously laboured to deprive it of the means of doing any thing. "The bank," said Mr. Morris, in reference to this subject, "will exist in spite of calumny, operate in spite of opposition, and do good in spite of malevolence." If there had been sinister purposes in view, it would have been easy to show what they were. The operations of a bank are such plain matters of arithmetic, that they are open to the most common understanding : there is nothing of mystery, disguise, or concealment, connected with them. Therefore, as these sinister views never were, and never could be shown, the defect of proof was itself a proof that the thing did not exist. "But," Mr. Morris remarks, "the matter does not terminate here. A groundless, unfounded, opposition against measures of public utility must proceed from some cause. If it proceed from an opposition to the public interests, their conduct is dangerous : but if it proceed from aversion to me—I pity them."

It was a strange assertion, that either Mr. Morris, or the state of Pennsylvania, should have formed a plan to keep Virginia poor. It was, indeed, probable that Pennsylvania would become rich : her soil and climate were good, the people quiet and industrious, and their rulers began to be sensible of their true interests, by encouraging commerce, by laying aside all the idle systems of specific supplies, and by contenting themselves with laying money taxes. Such a people would naturally and certainly become rich. On the other hand, if Virginia or any other state continued poor, it was their own fault. Prudence, diligence, and economy, promote

a host of public creditors, clamorous for payment, reduced to poverty and distress, and without sense or willingness to discover that the states, and not the financier, were the cause of all their miseries. When the torpor of those states had compelled him to form contracts at a high rate, in October, 1782, he thus writes to colonel Tilghman: "I shall not be surprised if I meet with blame for doing the only good thing possible, in one of the worst of all possible situations. Those, my good friend, who wish to hunt down the financier, can be, at times, either all alive, or quite indifferent, to the feelings of the army, just as it may best suit the purposes of the chase. For my own part, I am not much concerned about the opinions of such men, while I have in my favour the voice of the wise and the good, added to the fair testimony of an approving conscience."

At length, worn down by excessive toil, harassed by incessant claims which he could not satisfy, and subjected to hopeless mortifications and embarrassments from the defalcation of revenue, he resolved to abandon a situation in which he could be no longer useful, before his own honour and credit became entangled in the labyrinth, into which state prejudices laboured to plunge the nation; and from which he had, till that period, successfully preserved it. On the twenty-fourth of January, 1783, he advised the president of congress, that as nothing but the public danger could have induced him to accept the office, so he had determined to hold it until the danger was past, or else meet his ruin in the common wreck; that under greater difficulties than were apprehended by the most timid, and with less support than was expected by the least sanguine, the generous confidence of the public had accomplished more than he had presumed to hope; that his attention to the public debts arose from the conviction that funding them on solid revenues, was the last essential work

and seasonable information, to those who had confided in him. He therefore prayed that the injunction of secrecy might be removed. On the twenty-sixth of February, this petition was granted, and a committee appointed to which his letters were referred. On the fifth of March, this committee was superseded by another, consisting of five members, appointed to devise the proper measures to be taken, in consequence of the letters from the superintendant of finance.

Nothing would have induced Mr. Morris to take this step, but a painful conviction that the situation of those to whom the public were indebted was desperate. In a letter to general Washington, dated the twenty-seventh of February, he says that he sincerely believed that a great majority of the members of congress wish to do justice, but would not adopt the necessary measures, because they were afraid of offending their states. He strongly sympathised with the army and the situation of its commander. "I did flatter myself," he observed, "that I should have been able to present them that justice to which they are entitled, and in the mean time, I laboured to make their situation as tolerable as circumstances would permit. My thanks are due to all our officers, for I know that unwearied pains have been taken to give them disagreeable impressions; and I am, therefore, doubly indebted for the just sentiments which, amid so many misrepresentations, they have constantly entertained. I hope my successor will be more fortunate than I have been, and that our glorious revolution may be crowned with those acts of justice, without which the greatest human glory is but the shadow of a shade." To general Greene he remarked, that the step he was about to take was inconceivably painful to him, but that there was no alternative. While it was asserted on all hands that the national debts ought to be paid, it was evident that no efficient measures would be adopted for that

purpose. "I felt," he said, "the consequences of my resignation on public credit; I felt the probable derangement of our affairs; I felt the difficulties my successor would have to encounter; but still I felt, above all things, that it was a duty to be honest. This first and highest principle has been obeyed. I do not hold myself answerable for consequences. These are to be attributed to the opposers of just measures, let their rank and station be what it may. I expect much obloquy for my conduct, because this is what I know to be the reward for any conduct whatever, which is right. To the slander I am indifferent, and still more indifferent about the attempts to question the services I have rendered."

Among the accusations publicly preferred against Mr. Morris was the destruction of that public credit, which, unsupported by him, would long before have been annihilated. Men totally ignorant of the state of affairs put on the conduct, which severe necessity compelled him to pursue, the most malicious misconstructions, and affecting an intimate knowledge of things, charged him with the ruin of public credit, and interpreted the terms of his resignation into reflections upon congress. On the very day, however, on which he was publicly charged with these offences, despatches arrived from Europe conveying the intelligence that the credit of congress was at an end.

After repeated conferences with a committee of congress, Mr. Morris was induced to continue in office, under the express stipulation, that his duties were to be limited to the particular object of fulfilling his existing engagements, and that in which the necessity of affairs might compel him to form; congress, relieved by this determination, resolved, on the 1st of May, 1783, that he should receive their firm thanks towards completing his engagements.

This resignation afforded fresh fuel to the jealous fires which burned in the bosoms of the disaffected. It was represented as a factious desire to excite civil commotions; and the army, it was said, was to be employed as the instruments to promote flagitious, interested views. These vile slanders even found admittance into minds, which should for ever have been shut against them. But it is only necessary to refer to the administration of Mr. Morris, to show whether a sincere regard to public justice and public interest, or a sinister devotion to his own private emolument, were the influential motives which regulated his conduct. It is well known, moreover, that his resignation was not made until he was confident of peace. On being asked by a committee of congress, previous to the cessation of hostilities, if he would remain in case the war continued, his answer was, that "the same motives which first induced his acceptance would, in that case, continue to operate."

The happy tidings of peace brought no cessation of pain and embarrassments to the department of finance. Every thing done by the financier was converted into a ground of calumny, and he acknowledged that his desire to relieve that army, for whose support he had so long laboured, was greatly cooled, from the information that a great part of it joined in the reproaches which he had incurred for its benefit.

The spring of 1784 found the finances in a still more miserable condition. A large sum of bills drawn for account of the United States, on the credit of a loan in Holland, had been protested for non-acceptance, and the little show of credit that had been supported abroad was now totally gone. It was the deepest and sincerest wish of Mr. Morris, to have been the instrument towards establishing the affairs of America upon a solid basis, and almost every effort within the scope of human power had been exerted, to effect that object. At such a crisis,

he foresaw that without a miracle the country would be plunged into a state of inconceivable confusion and distress. At this period, unsupported and persecuted, he formed the intention of peremptorily resigning his station. "I think it necessary," he remarked to a friend, "for America that I should quit my office, even admitting the justice of those flattering expressions contained in your letter. I hope that persons will be found as honest and more capable, but be that as it may, the people will, I hope, more easily believe, when they hear truth from some other quarter. If not, they will, at least, feel the consequences which, though so often predicted, have not been provided against." On the twenty-fifth of March, he remarked, "my successors will perhaps be believed when they describe our situation, and at least that voice of party, which has hitherto opposed the public service on *private principles*, will be silenced." On the sixth of May, he requested congress to make eventual arrangements for administering the finances, and to appoint a committee to inspect the conduct of the department. Congress accordingly appointed a board consisting of three commissioners to superintend the treasury of the United States, after a well merited eulogium on the very great advantages derived from the arrangement and management of their finances. The appointment of the board of treasury was, in itself, a flattering token of his powerful abilities, which had so long been able to support and conduct a department which no single man now seemed capable of performing.

Mr. Morris, however, still continued to preside over the treasury, and make the final arrangements for his retirement. As the period appointed by congress, as the termination of his official labours, approached, he became extremely anxious to impress on the public mind the undoubted fulfilment of his engagements, and the unimpaired value of his notes. Accord-

ingly, on the eleventh of October, he issued a public notice, declaring that he had taken measures to provide for the payment of his various engagements on behalf of the United States, and particularly for such of his notes as were in circulation, and that, although he should not be in office, yet those notes would all be paid at maturity. For such payment he *pledged himself personally* to the holders, and therefore requested, that, if any attempt should be made to obtain them, by any suggestion, at less than the specified value, such attempts might be defeated. On the first day of November, 1784, Mr. Morris finally resigned his official duties, and, after an arduous administration, returned to the source from which it was derived the commission which he had so honourably and perseveringly borne. In rendering an account of his stewardship, he published an address to the inhabitants of the United States, which, together with the comprehensive details of his mode of managing the finances, ought to be incorporated in the course of the historical education of American youth. His concluding words were written in the true spirit of political foresight, and were only rendered nugatory by the establishment of the federal constitution. "The inhabitant of a little hamlet may feel pride in the sense of separate independence. But if there be not one government, which can draw forth and direct the efforts, the combined efforts of United America, our independence is but a name, our freedom a shadow, and our dignity a dream. To you, fellow citizens, these sentiments are addressed by one who has felt their force. In descending from that eminence on which your representatives had placed him, he avoids the shafts which calumny had aimed. He has no longer, therefore, any *personal* interest in those jealousies and distrusts which have embarrassed his administration, and may prove your ruin. He no longer asks confidence in himself. But it is his duty to declare his sincere opinion, that

if you will not repose in the members of that general federal government which you yourselves have chosen, that confidence and those powers, which are necessary, you must, and you will, (in no very distant period,) become the dupes of European politics. What may be the final event, time only can discover; but the probability is, that, first divided, then governed, our children may lament, in chains, the folly of their fathers. May heaven avert these evils, and endue us with wisdom so to act, as may best promote the present and future peace, prosperity, and happiness, of our country." On the retirement of this eminent man from office, it was affirmed by two members of the Massachusetts delegation, "that it cost congress at the rate of eighteen millions per annum, hard dollars, to carry on the war, till he was appointed financier, and then it cost them but about four millions."

In addition to the arduous duties already imposed on Mr. Morris, congress resolved, on the seventh of September, 1781, that until an agent of marine should be appointed, all the duties, powers, and authority, assigned to that office, should devolve upon, and be executed by the superintendant of finance. This additional burthen was extremely disagreeable to Mr. Morris: "I could have wished," he observed, "that this task had fallen to the lot of some other person. I could have wished to bestow on this subject an attention undissipated by other cares. But it is now some time since I have learned to sacrifice to the public service, my ease, my wishes, and my inclinations." No agent, however, being appointed, he continued to perform the duties of this office, and regulate the affairs of our unfortunate navy, until the close of the year 1784.

No individual, no public body, did more than Mr. Morris, to extricate the country from pecuniary embarrassments. But such exertions are not blazoned with the brilliant ex-

exploits of conquerors and heroes, which illuminate the annals of a country. It has been shown, however, that the operations of the machinery which guided the war of the revolution, would often have stood still, had not Morris been principally instrumental in furnishing the moving power, after all preceding means had perished. His extraordinary exertions in the department of finance; the extent of his influence in the commercial relations of the nation, both at home and abroad; and his successful efforts in the accomplishment of its independence; have elicited the honourable acknowledgment, that to the zeal and ability of Washington alone were superior honours due; nor are there wanting many of those who now enjoy the blessings in the attainment of which he so gloriously participated, who fully feel and acknowledge the truth of the sentiments maintained by the Italian historian, that "the Americans certainly owed, *and still owe*, as much acknowledgment to the financial operations of Robert Morris, as to the negotiations of Benjamin Franklin, or even to the arms of Washington." It has been well written, that such important services rendered to this country, while they entitle Mr. Morris to universal admiration, should, at the same time, have secured him some distinguished testimony of public gratitude. As he richly merited, so ought he to have enjoyed, in old age, the uninterrupted blessings of peace and happiness. But at the conclusion of the war, he was abandoned by those propitious fortunes which seemed attendant on all his prior enterprises. He had successfully husbanded the funds of the public, but vast and ruinous speculation totally prostrated his own pecuniary concerns.

Nor was his financial fame bounded by the limits of this vast continent. It pervaded every region of Europe, where the bloody and protracted struggle of an infant nation against the gigantic power of Great Britain baffled the calculations

of the politician, and excited the sympathy and admiration of the virtuous and benevolent. "Your conduct, activity, and address," said our minister at the court of Versailles, in a letter to Mr. Morris, dated the twelfth of August, 1782, "as financier, and provider for the exigencies of the state, is much admired and praised here ; its good consequence being so evident, particularly with regard to the rising credit of our country, and the value of bills." Every sacrifice that could be made he offered upon the altar of patriotism. He abandoned the ease and enjoyments of domestic life, and devoted his time, his talents, and his fortune, to the public benefit. It may be said of him, that like the Roman Curtius, he sacrificed himself for the good of the commonwealth. He discarded all attention to his private business, and consigned it to other hands, being resolved not to mingle his own affairs with those of the public, or suffer his mind to be, for a moment, diverted from his high official duties. He never permitted himself, or his private concerns, to interfere with the business of the nation : so far, in fact, did he carry this refined idea of duty, that he inflexibly adhered to a rule which he had laid down on his installation as financier, never to recommend any individual to office. He introduced into the department every reform which the most judicious and rigid economy could devise. His sole system of finance was that which resulted from the plain self-evident dictates of moral honesty. Taxation and economy were the two great pillars by which that system could alone be supported ; "and," said Mr. Morris, "if the states will provide the former, I will pledge myself for the latter, so far as my abilities will permit." They did not supply it : yet to the financier, every eye was turned : to him was stretched forth the empty hand of every public creditor, and against him, instead of the state author-

ities, were the complaints and 'imprecations of every unsatisfied claimant directed.

The assembly of Pennsylvania having, in 1785, annulled the charter of the bank of North America, which, under the fostering care of Mr. Morris, had so largely contributed to the support of the war, it was resolved to send the most influential delegates from the city of Philadelphia, for the purpose, if practicable, of obtaining its renewal, and thereby relieve a great proportion of the stockholders, comprising a very helpless portion of our citizens, whose comfortable support depended on the continuance of the institution. For this express purpose, Mr. Morris, ever ready to devote himself to the public good, consented, in 1786, to become a candidate, in conjunction with Mr. Fitzsimmons and Mr. Clymer. The real cause of the measure which had been adopted by the preceding legislature, was ascribed to the continuance of the same party spirit which had been so violently opposed to Mr. Morris and his friends, during his financial administration. The debates on the occasion excited great interest among all classes of society. The argumentative force and eloquence of Mr. Morris would have produced conviction in the mind of any man, not previously determined, if possible, to destroy the bank, and not abandoned to the government of party prejudice. The question to renew the charter was lost by a majority of thirteen; but the exertions of the friends of the institution were, in the succeeding legislature, crowned with success.

In the following year, Mr. Morris was elected a member of the memorable convention which framed the federal constitution;—a convention constituting a body of political learning and virtue, from which alone could have emanated the never-dying document, that is destined to preserve and perpetuate the prosperity of the country. It was in this assem-

bly that he again met, in solemn deliberation, many mighty spirits who had ridden on the revolutionary storm, and diverted or repelled its fury. It was here that he recognised, as coadjutors, in forming a permanent bond of union for the country whose fetters they had assisted to sever, Sherman, Franklin, Clymer, Wilson, Read, Wythe, and Gerry, who, with strong hearts, and steady hands, had joined him in affixing their signatures to the imperishable charter of independence.

Mr. Morris, in the course of his administration, had severely felt, and deeply but ineffectually deplored, the want of an efficient federal government. The feebleness of the United States in congress, and the excessive powers of the individual states, had been the primary causes which embarrassed his operations, and rendered his best devised exertions abortive. On this subject, his complaints were uniform and incessant. On the twenty-fourth of April, 1782, he observes, in a letter to general Greene; "I have observed by the tenor of several of your letters on the subject of the confederation, that your sentiments coincide entirely with my own. The inefficacy of that instrument is daily felt, and the want of obligatory and coercive clauses on the states will probably be productive of the most fatal consequences." In a letter to Alexander Hamilton, dated the twenty-eighth of August, 1782, he more fully develops his sentiments on the subject. "I have not even yet seen the resolutions of your legislature relative to an extension of the powers of congress. Indeed, power is generally such a darling object with weak minds, that they must feel extreme reluctance to bid it farewell; neither do I believe that any thing will induce a general consent to part with it, but a perfect sense of absolute necessity. This may arise from two sources;—the one, of reason; and the other, of feeling; the former, more safe and more cer-

tain ; the latter, always severe and often dangerous. It is, my dear sir, in circumstances like this, that a patriotic mind, seeking the great good of the whole, on enlightened principles, can best be distinguished from those vulgar souls whose narrow optics can see but the little circle of selfish concerns. Unhappily, such souls are but too common, and but too often fill the seats of dignity and authority. A firm, wise, manly system of federal government, is what I once wished, what I now hope, what I dare not expect, but what I will not despair of."

On the first of October, 1788, Mr. Morris received a renewed mark of the high confidence which he continued to enjoy among his fellow citizens : he was appointed, by the general assembly, to represent the state of Pennsylvania in the first senate of the United States, that assembled at New York, after the ratification of the federal compact.

Although Mr. Morris received no other than a common English education, he possessed superior talents, which fostered by care, and ripened by experience, compensated this early defect, and rendered their possessor as conspicuous in the common intercourse of society, as he was in the cabinet. His conversation was cheerful, easy, and interesting ; but not often of a literary cast, owing to the want of a classical education. He was, however, by no means deficient in general reading. With a mind at once acute and penetrating, he was extremely well versed in what are called the affairs of the world, both public and private. His political knowledge was very extensive, and it was almost all gained from practical sources, and social intercourse. His public speaking was fluent, correct, and impressive. He was not a frequent, and was, therefore, a more welcome speaker ; being always listened to with profound attention. At the beginning of his financial administration, and while he was a member

in republics ; a stranger, or rather a citizen of the universe, it excludes alike the virtues and the prejudices that stand in the way of its interest. It has also been asserted by the marquis de Chastellux, that the fortunate return of his vessels, and the success of his privateers, increased his riches beyond his expectations, if not his wishes, and that he was, " in fact, so much accustomed to the success of his privateers, that when he was observed, on a Sunday, to be more serious than usual, the conclusion was, that no prize had arrived in the preceding week." This gentleman was quarter-master-general to the French auxiliaries in America, and all those acquainted with his respectable talents were astonished that he could be the author of the travels which he published, and the fictions which they contained. The assertion that the Sunday seriousness or pleasantry of Mr. Morris was, at all connected with the arrival, or non-arrival, of prizes, is as unworthy of M. de Chastellux as it is inapplicable to Mr. Morris : his privateering concerns possessed little or no influence over his gravity or cheerfulness. He only justified the practice as being inevitably necessary in *our* war, in which our public ships were of little service, and formed a miserable contrast to our present navy. He was always of opinion with Dr. Franklin on this subject ; and detested the general practice as a licensed buccaneering. But, in common with a large proportion of those who opposed it, in principle, as an indiscriminate custom, he believed that the annoyances to the British trade, and the benefits which public affairs derived from our private armed vessels, overbalanced the general objections to a practice, which, in common wars, especially those entered into by the ambition or rivalry of princes, is nothing less than maritime plunder by one individual from another, guiltless in the quarrel. The people of England, operated on by national pride and delusion, were as malign-

nantly hostile to the people of this country, as was their government; though many worthy individuals formed honourable exceptions. It was, therefore, a war between people and people; and not merely between prince and prince: hence, individual hostility seemed more allowable than common cases could warrant. And in fact, however it may be morally, it is a moot point whether it be not politically, indispensable, legally to allow and regulate this deplorable practice, rather than subject the ocean to lawless plunderers; for such they will be, as all experience evinces.

It has also been stated, that Mr. Morris certainly enriched himself greatly by the war, and possessed a great variety of means for acquiring wealth; that his connexions with Mr. Holker, then consul general of France at Philadelphia, and the exclusive permission to ship cargoes of flour and other produce in the time of general embargoes, were to him the sources of immense profit; and that his situation gave him many similar opportunities, of which his capital, his credit, and abilities, always enabled him to take advantage. "What purchases of tobacco," writes M. de Chastellux, "what profits of every kind, might not a man of Mr. Morris's abilities make, with such powerful advantages?" All these vile insinuations are totally false. Mr. Morris never engaged in speculation during his continuance in office; he never enjoyed any commercial monopoly or privileges on his own account, although, as it has been already shown, he incurred the odium by covering the operations of congress; and, so far from enriching himself by the advantages of his station, it was in that station where the seeds of his pecuniary destruction were sown. It not only actually impoverished him at the moment, but the vastness of his money transactions, and the almost boundless scope of his financial duties, gave to his mind a correspondent tone, which, no doubt, mainly concurred in

leading him from the proper pursuits of commerce into a train of enormous, unmanageable, and ruinous land speculations.

At the conclusion of the war, he was among the first who engaged in the East India and China trade, which by an increase, as astonishing as it is unexampled, has now become a lucrative branch of revenue and commerce. In the spring of 1784, he despatched the ship *Empress*, of China, captain Green, from New York to Canton, being the first American vessel that ever appeared in that port. He also made the first attempt to effect what is termed an "out of season" passage to China: this passage is effected by going round the south cape of New Holland, thus avoiding the periodical winds prevalent at certain periods in the China sea. In prosecution of this object the ship *Alliance*, captain Reed, equipped with ten twelve-pounders, and sixty-five men, sailed from the Delaware on the twentieth of June, 1787, and arrived in safety, on the twenty-second of December, at Canton, where considerable inquiries were made by the European commanders respecting the route that had been taken, as it was wholly a novel thing for a vessel to arrive at that season of the year. As no ship had ever before made a similar passage, great astonishment was manifested; and the lords of the British admiralty subsequently applied to Mr. Morris, for information with regard to the track of the ship. It is said that her intended route was, previous to her departure, marked out by Mr. Morris, with the assistance of Mr. Gouverneur Morris.

Although active in the acquisition of wealth as a merchant, no one more freely parted with his gain, for public or private purposes of a meritorious nature, whether to support the credit of the government, to promote objects of humanity, or local improvement, the welfare of meritorious individuals

ration of the people. Independent in his principles and conduct, he never courted the countenance of living man. Warmly devoted to his friends, he was almost idolized by them, but especially by those who were particularly dear to him—Alexander Hamilton and Gouverneur Morris. Whenever Washington came to Philadelphia, his first visit was to Robert Morris, now surrounded by the chains which he had assisted the hero to burst asunder.

In all his misfortunes, he did not utter a complaint, notwithstanding the ingratitude of his contemporaries. He was, however, compelled to refrain from walking the streets, being continually followed by a grateful crowd, consisting of the *middle and lower* classes of the people.

His unfortunate scheme of land speculations, which embittered an old age that ought to have been surrounded with all the ease and happiness that earthly gratitude could bestow, was a frenzy which totally transformed his character. The mania of engrossing lands, under the fanciful idea that Europe would pour out its numbers and treasures into our wilderness, was not confined to him; although it proved more fatal to him than to others.

Fatigued with the political cares, which, from the time of his election to congress under the federal constitution, had so completely engrossed his mind, he was now anxious to retire to the relaxation of private life. His refusal to accept the situation of secretary of the treasury, offered to him by Washington, proves how little his patriotism was tinged with ambition. Being requested to designate a gentleman for that office, he named colonel Hamilton. General Washington expressed considerable surprise at this selection, not being aware of the relative qualifications of Mr. Hamilton; but Mr. Morris declaring his own personal knowledge of his entire competency, he was appointed to that important post, and

and throwing new and important lights on the annals of the revolution. Every endeavour has been used to impart to it, that correctness which will entitle it to full reliance ; and in addition to the valuable information which is derived from the brief and authentic biography, by the pen of Dr. Mease, inserted in the American edition of the Edinburgh Encyclopedia, from the various writings of Mr. Morris himself on the subject of finance, and from the general histories of events in which he took an active part, we have been enabled to refer to private and highly correct sources of information hitherto unused.

So long as a record of the actions and services of a man of such distinguished utility shall be preserved, it is needless to say that the memory of him cannot be lost ; but while the recollection of his multiplied services are deeply engraven on the tablet of our hearts, let us hope that the day is not distant, when some public monument, recording the most momentous occurrences of his life, and characteristic of national feeling and gratitude, may mark the spot where rest the remains of ROBERT MORRIS.

END OF VOLUME II.





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